

**Selected portions of Massachusetts Department of Elementary
and Secondary Education Board Meeting Minutes that
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YouTube channel**

assembled by

Scott Andrade

2012 minutes

**Minutes of the Special Meeting
of the Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education**

**January 23, 2012
4:10 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.**

**Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
75 Pleasant Street
Malden, MA**

Members of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education Present:

Maura Banta, Chair, Melrose
Beverly Holmes, Vice Chair, Springfield
Vanessa Calderón-Rosado, Milton
Harneen Chernow, Jamaica Plain
Gerald Chertavian, Cambridge
James DiTullio, Designee for the Secretary of Education
Matthew Gifford, Chair, Student Advisory Council, Brookline
Jeff Howard, Reading
Ruth Kaplan, Brookline
David Roach, Sutton

Mitchell D. Chester, Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education, Secretary to the Board

Members of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education Absent:

Dana Mohler-Faria, Bridgewater

Chair Banta called the meeting to order at 4:10 p.m.

Chair Banta welcomed the Board to its special meeting on the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC). Commissioner Chester said he was pleased to welcome Michael Cohen, President of Achieve, Inc., and Laura Slover, Senior Vice President of Achieve, Inc. The commissioner said that a funding opportunity grew out of Race to the Top for a consortium of states to develop next-generation assessments. The commissioner said a major concern in Massachusetts is that more than a third of public school graduates get placed in non-credit bearing coursework in public higher education.

Mr. Cohen thanked the commissioner and said it was a pleasure to visit the Board again. Mr. Cohen described PARCC's Governing Board, which Commissioner Chester chairs. Mr. Cohen said that as was true for the development of the Common Core State

Standards, Massachusetts was a bellwether state for PARCC. Mr. Cohen said Massachusetts is setting the benchmark, and it is a high standard.

Mr. Cohen described six priorities for PARCC, which aims to: (1) create high quality assessments; (2) build a pathway to college and career readiness for all students; (3) support educators in the classroom; (4) develop 21st century, technology-based assessments; (5) advance accountability at all levels; and (6) build an assessment system that is sustainable and affordable. Ms. Slover said a key facet of PARCC is that it is not just a one-time, end-of-year, multiple-choice assessment. Ms. Slover said PARCC will have multiple components and two summative components will be: (1) computer-based testing that is innovative and scored rapidly; and (2) a performance-based assessment that calls on students to apply knowledge. Ms. Slover also described a speaking and learning assessment that would be a performance assessment that requires a student to do a formal presentation in front of an audience. That assessment would be scored on a rubric.

Ms. Slover said PARCC will have a laser-like focus for preparing students for college and career. It would start with tools for diagnostic assessments for K-2 students. PARCC will develop bridge courses for 11th or 12th grade students who are not scoring at the "ready" level. Ms. Slover said PARCC is not just about testing, in that it also provides supports for students and teachers. PARCC will provide a set of rich examples, prototypes and sample tasks to help students and teachers know what the target is. Ms. Slover said PARCC will be delivered entirely online, though students in grades 3-5 can take the assessment using paper and pencil. Ms. Slover said computer-based assessments allow for economies of scale to drive down costs and produce a much faster return of results.

Mr. Cohen said that in the PARCC states, school level accountability is a significant part of the reform strategy. Mr. Cohen said all the states understood that what gets tested drives instruction. Mr. Cohen said what was needed was a test robust enough to support accountability judgments, support the evaluation of educators, and produce common cut scores to provide for comparability of results across the states.

Mr. Cohen said the cost per student per test for PARCC will be \$11 per student. This assumes that the performance assessments are scored by teachers. Mr. Cohen said if we get to the use of artificial intelligence to score tests, then costs will be even lower. By comparison, MCAS costs about \$23 per student. A big part of the cost savings is tied to the assessments being computer-based. Mr. Cohen said this does require investments in technology infrastructure and in improving instruction. Mr. Cohen said he is aware that the federal grant supporting PARCC runs out in 2014-15, and the consortium has started plans to sustain the effort.

Dr. Howard asked if the only technology-based test is the end-of-year assessment. Ms. Slover said that all are technology-based. Ms. Slover said the performance based design is delivered by computer, but the model includes a predominance of teacher-scored items. Mr. Cohen said states will vary on teachers scoring or hiring a vendor. Dr. Howard asked how PARCC is related to NAEP. Ms. Slover said it is not the intention of PARCC to

supplant NAEP. Ms. Slover said Achieve is currently in discussion with the National Assessment Governing Board, which oversees NAEP, to talk about the possibility of item embedding.

Ms. Chernow asked if PARCC will replace MCAS. Commissioner Chester said there is no pre-determined commitment to sunset MCAS. The commissioner said if PARCC is a step forward for us and does not water down our high standards, he would likely recommend to the Board a transition plan to move from MCAS. Ms. Chernow said it looks like a lot of assessment time involved here, and also computer labs seem extraordinarily expensive. Ms. Chernow asked about the difference between a cut score, high school graduation, and being college ready. Commissioner Chester said testing time is a critical issue, and many districts are doing a lot of assessment, only a small part of which is what the state requires. The commissioner said the goal is to build an assessment system that is valuable enough for districts to abandon some of those other tests.

The commissioner said the technology piece is huge, and in the short run the state will have to offer paper and pencil alternatives. The commissioner said the state will complete an analysis of each building's technology infrastructure. Commissioner Chester said he spoke with Treasurer Grossman today about the possibility of committing School Building Authority (SBA) funds to support the strengthening of infrastructure in each school building.

Ms. Kaplan arrived at 4:50 p.m.

Mr. Cohen said he would advise against states setting a college readiness standard for a high school diploma. He said a college ready level should be set in an accurate way. Mr. Cohen said you want to be able to say at the end of the 11th grade either that a student has done so well that the student is on track to do credit-bearing work in college, or that a student is not yet college ready and here are some suggestions for the senior year.

Ms. Slover said PARCC will develop two math sequences, one for Algebra I, II and Geometry, and one for Integrated Math. Mr. Roach asked about the differences between PARCC and the other consortium, Smarter Balance. Mr. Cohen said PARCC will assess how well students met grade-level standards, while Smarter Balance will be computer adaptive testing that will try to locate where a student's performance is. Mr. Roach asked about cut scores. Commissioner Chester said the key driver of the 18 governing states is to come up with a common standard for college and career readiness. The commissioner said the college readiness standard would be constant across states, while any Competency Determination standard would be state-specific.

Mr. Roach asked about the psychometrics of computer-based testing. Mr. Cohen said there is no reason to think that we can't achieve a high level of reliability. Mr. Cohen said no state will accept tests that do not meet or exceed current levels of psychometrics. Chair Banta asked why computer-based testing won't be available for grades 3, 4 and 5 and whether that is related to cost or appropriateness. Ms. Slover said it is by design

because there is a sense of a digital divide that is not the same for all students in those grades.

Mr. Gifford expressed a concern about the speaking and listening section for students in the early grades. Ms. Slover said expectations will shift as students get older, and that the speaking and listening portion for younger students may look quite different than for older students. Mr. Chertavian asked what concerns there are about PARCC. Ms. Slover said PARCC is on track, but there are multiple milestones that lie ahead and little room for error. Ms. Slover said the technology infrastructure is the biggest challenge.

Dr. Calderón-Rosado said she is concerned about the technology and its associated costs. Mr. Cohen said he estimates the summative assessments to be about \$11 per student, and the mid-year assessments to be less costly. Dr. Calderón-Rosado said she was concerned about human scoring if results will be used as an educator evaluation tool, and about adding to teachers' workloads.

Mr. Cohen said the timeline for PARCC is for it to be ready in the 2014-15 school year. Commissioner Chester said the caution about who scores the test is right on target. The commissioner said right now all tests in Massachusetts have open-ended items that are scored by people who are not in-state. The commissioner said artificial intelligence scoring continues to evolve and offers an interesting potential to bring down costs. Commissioner Chester said part of the challenge is to anticipate where the development curve will be two years from now.

Chair Banta asked if students will get to pilot-test this new system. Mr. Cohen said when prototypes are developed they will have to be tried out with students.

Ms. Slover said PARCC's real goal is to measure the content standards of the Common Core State Standards. The tasks will embody the kinds of things you want students to be doing. Acting Director of Student Assessment Elizabeth Davis said that two Race to the Top initiatives parallel what PARCC is doing – curriculum-embedded performance assessments (CEPA) and online interim and formative assessments.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:

VOTED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education adjourn the meeting at 6:00 p.m., subject to the call of the chair.

The vote was unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,

Mitchell D. Chester
Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education
and Secretary to the Board

**Minutes of the Regular Meeting
of the Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education**

January 24, 2012
8:35 a.m. – 1:15 p.m.

**Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
75 Pleasant Street
Malden, MA**

Members of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education Present:

Maura Banta, Chair, Melrose
Beverly Holmes, Vice Chair, Springfield
Vanessa Calderón-Rosado, Milton
Harneen Chernow, Jamaica Plain
Gerald Chertavian, Cambridge
Matthew Gifford, Chair, Student Advisory Council, Brookline
Jeff Howard, Reading
Ruth Kaplan, Brookline
Dana Mohler-Faria, Bridgewater
Paul Reville, Secretary of Education, Worcester
David Roach, Sutton

Mitchell D. Chester, Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education, Secretary to the Board

Chair Banta called the meeting to order at 8:35 a.m.

Comments from the Chair

Chair Banta said she attended the Governor's State of the State address, and in that speech the Governor's commitment to K-12 education and higher education was clear. The chair said the Governor also presented an exciting new model for community colleges. Chair Banta asked chairs of the various Board committees to provide updates.

Mr. Chertavian said the College and Career Readiness Task Force held its first meeting and the 30 or so members include a broad representation of business, education, union, and trade officials. Mr. Chertavian said the group will look at how to align with Governor Patrick's objectives around the skills gap, so that young people are career ready as well as college ready. Mr. Chertavian said the group had a good start and appointed four subcommittees.

Secretary Reville arrived at 8:40 a.m.

Ms. Chernow, chair of the Proficiency Gap Committee, said the committee heard a presentation from Department staff on its ESEA/NCLB flexibility waiver request, the creation of a Progress and Performance Index, and the goal to reduce proficiency gaps in half by 2016-17.

Ms. Holmes, chair of the Charter School Committee, said the committee is looking at both short- and long-term issues concerning process and policy. She said the goal of the committee is to ensure the Board's work is efficient, effective, and consistent. Chair Banta said one issue is how often the Board hears from constituents on new charter applicants. The chair said Board members go to each community for public hearings and spend a significant amount of time hearing from constituents. The chair said the Board will also take any amount of written testimony.

Ms. Kaplan, who is the Board's representative to the Massachusetts Teaching, Learning and Leading Survey (TeLLS), said the Race to the Top grant included a requirement to conduct a survey of the working conditions of teachers. Ms. Kaplan said this year's survey would be launched on March 12th and run through April 20th. Ms. Kaplan said there is a separate component for administrators.

Chair Banta thanked all members who are chairing or serving on committees.

Comments from the Commissioner

Commissioner Chester said there is much to celebrate. The commissioner referred Board members to the Race to the Top Year 1 report behind Tab 12 of the Board book, which summarizes what we have accomplished to date. The commissioner also noted the Board's annual report under Tab 14. He called attention to the *Education Week* assessment of states behind Tab 15 that showed Massachusetts ranked first among all states in two areas, Chance of Success and K-12 Achievement. The commissioner said he had a great meeting recently with Matthew Gifford and three other members of the state Student Advisory Council to think about how they can engage Lawrence students. Commissioner Chester said he recently participated in a two-day meeting in Washington, D.C. with other Race to the Top states.

The commissioner discussed the Superior Court decision in the Dolan case, which upheld the legitimacy of the process by which the Board and commissioner decided to grant a charter to the Gloucester Community Arts Charter School. General Counsel Rhoda Schneider noted that the decision is subject to appeal. General Counsel Schneider said the decision affirms the integrity of the Board's process in granting charters in general and in granting this charter in particular. General Counsel Schneider said the judge's decision is strongly worded, and the judge agreed with the Department on all points.

Commissioner Chester introduced Jeff Riley, whom he appointed as receiver of the Lawrence Public School District earlier in January. Mr. Riley addressed the Board, saying he was excited to be here but more excited to be in Lawrence. Mr. Riley said he

sees an opportunity for children in Lawrence and the possibility for the community, teachers, and stakeholders to work together to make positive changes.

Mr. Gifford said the state Student Advisory Committee is available to advise Mr. Riley on student input. Mr. Riley says he looks forward to it, and noted the significant contribution that the Boston Student Advisory Council had in that district. Dr. Calderón-Rosado asked what Mr. Riley did in Boston to turn around performance that will inform Lawrence. Mr. Riley said they personalized education for students. Mr. Riley said his school made heavy use of data to address gaps that students had in their education, and the school took teams of teachers to the community to meet with parents. Ms. Kaplan asked about Mr. Riley's philosophy on the whole child. Mr. Riley said his background is as an adjustment counselor, and he believes deeply that students need support for their social-emotional needs so that they are ready to learn. Mr. Riley said we need to address opportunity gaps, and students need high quality enrichment programs.

Comments from the Secretary

Secretary Reville on behalf of the Governor welcomed Mr. Riley and said he is eager to work with the receiver. Secretary Reville discussed the Governor's State of the State address and its focus on youth violence and community colleges. The secretary said the Governor's FY13 budget proposal would be announced tomorrow and will include the Gateway Cities initiative and a record commitment to Chapter 70 funding.

Public Comment

1. State Senator Pat Jehlen addressed the Board about the proposed Somerville Progressive Charter School.
2. Selena Fitantes, founder of the Somerville Progressive Charter School, addressed the Board about the school's application.
3. State Representative Stephen DiNatale addressed the Board about the North Central Charter Essential School.
4. Stephanie Davolos addressed the Board about the North Central Charter Essential School.
5. Robert Kostka from the Massachusetts Council for the Social Studies addressed the Board on the MCAS History test.
6. Superintendent Alan Ingram, School Committee members Chris Collins and Norman Roldan, and Springfield Education Association president Tim Collins addressed the Board on Springfield and the 2012 MCAS administration.
7. The Honorable Lisa Wong, Mayor of Fitchburg, addressed the Board on the North Central Charter Essential School.

Approval of the Minutes

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:

VOTED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education approve the minutes of the December 19, 2011 special meeting and December 20, 2011 regular meeting.

The vote was unanimous.

Amendments to Regulations on Innovation Schools, 603 CMR 48.00

Executive Office of Education General Counsel Jim DiTullio said there were three very small changes to the proposed regulations that related to a typographical error and a reference. The commissioner said the regulations sent out for comment by the Board in November received several comments. Bridget Rodríguez, Director of Planning and Collaboration at the Executive Office of Education, said the intent was to clarify the regulations and make sure the approval process is clear to applicants. Ms. Rodríguez said other changes pertained to issues around the definition of a "teacher," whether a revised prospectus could be resubmitted to a superintendent, conversions of existing academies to innovation schools, and notifying the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education of the establishment of an innovation school. Mr. DiTullio discussed the five comments received from the Massachusetts Teachers Association and how those were addressed.

Commissioner Chester said the Department received some comments related to virtual schools, but that is not part of this discussion. The commissioner said the Department had sent to the Legislature a set of recommendations to change the process for authorizing virtual schools with more robust quality control by the state. Mr. Roach asked about regulations on virtual schools. Commissioner Chester said the regulations require a virtual school to serve at least 25% students from within the district unless the district receives a waiver from the Board, and the Board decided not to grant additional waivers at this time. He said if the Legislature creates a new law on virtual schools, then the Board would need to adopt new regulations. Mr. DiTullio noted that the amendments to the regulations make one change regarding special education and virtual schools.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:

VOTED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, in accordance with G.L. chapter 69, § 1B, and chapter 71, § 92, and having solicited and reviewed public comment in accordance with the Administrative Procedure Act, G.L. chapter 30A, § 3, hereby adopt the amendments to the Innovation Schools Regulations, 603 CMR 48.00, as presented by the Commissioner.

The vote was unanimous.

Secretary Reville had to leave the meeting at 10:10 a.m. and Mr. DiTullio sat as designee.

School and District Leadership Initiatives

Senior Associate Commissioner Lynda Foisy introduced Glenn Koocher, executive director of the Massachusetts Association of School Committees (MASC), Tom Scott, executive director of the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents (MASS), and Joan Connolly, project director for the new superintendent induction program. Ms. Foisy described the system that the Department is designing called "Massachusetts Way of Leading." Ms. Foisy said there are four initiatives based on current research, and each includes a strong coaching concept and strong evaluation piece. Ms. Foisy said the National Institute for School Leadership (NISL) developed a set of school leadership skills, and over 1,200 principals have been trained as of 2011. Ms. Foisy said NISL training is now offered through the District and School Assistance Centers (DSACs).

Mr. Scott thanked the commissioner and former deputy commissioner Karla Baehr for including the district leadership initiative in the Race to the Top grant proposal. He said that of the 277 superintendents in the Commonwealth, there is typically about an annual turnover of 55-65, or close to 20 percent. Mr. Scott said the position of superintendent is complicated and challenging. Mr. Scott said the New Superintendent Induction Program is offered to all new superintendents or superintendents new to Massachusetts. The program provides important tools, skills and strategies to focus on student learning. Joan Connolly presented the curriculum and coaching model.

Mr. Koocher said that starting in 2003, new school committee members have been required to get 8 hours of training through MASC. Mr. Koocher said MASC does intensive work with school committees on student achievement, and provides a focus on superintendent – school committee relationships. There is also a heavy focus on fiduciary responsibilities and the role of school committees in strategies for student success.

Ms. Foisy said the newest project is in building effective labor-management relations with a focus on student achievement.

In response to questions, Mr. Scott said half of superintendent turnover is retirement and the other half is moving to other districts. Mr. Scott said the average age of a superintendent has not changed over the past 8 years; it is a little over 56.

Dr. Howard said this is a terrific initiative and asked if other states had done anything similar in terms of a coordinated approach to governance. Commissioner Chester said Mr. Scott had not found much going on in other states. Ms. Kaplan said she is excited about the superintendent leadership process, and asked whether diversity of the pool is a goal. Mr. Scott said we have concerns about the pipeline and MASS has a affiliation with Boston College where MASS taps school leaders for a three-year doctoral program. Mr. Scott said 50 percent of the slots are for under-represented groups and those representing baseline populations such as urban centers.

Dr. Calderón-Rosado said she is excited about this initiative and sees connections with closing the proficiency gap. She asked what kinds of support the new receiver in

Lawrence, Jeff Riley, will have. Commissioner Chester said Mr. Riley would not lack for support. The commissioner said the receiver will meet with Department senior staff on a weekly basis and is meeting with many interested outside organizations as well as stakeholders.

The commissioner said this is a very impressive body of work. Commissioner Chester commended the work of Senior Associate Commissioner Lynda Foisy and Associate Commissioner Lise Zeig. The commissioner said the kind of leadership that Mr. Scott and Mr. Koocher represent, as well as the two teacher unions, is invaluable.

Mr. Gifford and Dr. Mohler-Faria had to leave at 11:15 a.m.

District and School Assistance Centers: UMass-Donahue Institute Evaluation Report

Senior Associate Commissioner Lynda Foisy said that each of the ten Commissioner's Districts has a liaison in the Office of District and School Turnaround. Ms. Zeig said the District and School Assistance Centers (DSACs) provide assistance based on districts' priority status. Ms. Zeig said these six regional assistance centers are virtual, though they are provided space when needed from the Readiness Centers. The DSACs' purpose is to provide regional assistance to districts.

Ms. Zeig said the Department commissioned an evaluation with the UMass-Donahue Institute that helps us think through the design of the program. Ms. Zeig said there is a range of participation among districts, and districts rated a lot of the assistance as high quality. Ms. Foisy said DSACs are successful by building relationships and trust with educators in the field, supporting a cycle of continuous improvement and building capacity.

Dr. Howard asked when student outcomes would be reviewed in relation to the work of the DSACs. Ms. Zeig said the Department is talking with evaluators about how to collect that information.

Charter Schools

Edward M. Kennedy Academy of Health Careers: Major Amendment Request

Commissioner Chester said this Horace Mann charter school has submitted a major amendment request to double its enrollment. The commissioner said this is a worthy request, the school is in high demand, and it is doing a good job. Commissioner Chester added that Superintendent Johnson supports this request. Ms. Chernow asked about back-filling vacant seats. Charter School Office staff member Alison Bagg said back-filling does not apply to Horace Mann charter schools.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:

VOTED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, in accordance with General Laws chapter 71, section 89, and 603 CMR 1.00, hereby amend the charter granted to the following school as presented by the Commissioner:

Edward M. Kennedy Academy for Health Careers, a Horace Mann Charter School (enrollment increase from 220 to 448 students)

Location:	Boston
Maximum enrollment:	448
Grade levels:	9-12
Effective year:	2012-13

The vote was unanimous.

Innovation Academy Charter School: Report on Conditions and Major Amendment Request

Commissioner Chester reported on the school's conditions and a recommendation to approve a major amendment request. The commissioner said the school has been doing a good job and is looking to expand enrollment in its 5-12 program. The commissioner said the condition had to do with programs for English language learners. Commissioner Chester said the condition has been met and consequently he recommends that the amendment request be approved.

Mr. Roach asked what percentage of the students are ELL. Ms. Bagg said three students out of 600 are ELL. Dr. Howard asked for similar documentation that the Board received for the North Central Charter Essential School. The commissioner said the Department could get that data, and we typically have more documentation in the case of a renewal. Ms. Kaplan asked since one of the communities is Lowell, why the ELL population is so low. Charter School director Marlon Davis said a lottery determines who comes through the doors. Ms. Kaplan asked if students from Lowell get free transportation to the school. Mr. Davis said parents are responsible for transportation to charter schools outside of the district. Ms. Chernow said it was hard to vote to increase enrollment for schools where the Board does not have a lot of information.

Ms. Holmes expressed a concern about expanding enrollment if the demographics do not reflect the broader student population. Deputy Commissioner Wulfson said this is an issue the Board has discussed, and the 2010 Achievement Gap Act placed an added emphasis on recruiting and retaining students in underrepresented categories. Mr. Wulfson said there is a limit to what schools can do because the lottery remains in effect. Commissioner Chester asked about the impact of delaying the Board's vote a month. Mr.

Wulfson said it would be hard to implement the amendment for this school year with the deadline to report pre-enrollment numbers to the Department. The Board tabled the discussion until later in the meeting when more data would be available.

North Central Charter Essential School: Renewal with Probation

Commissioner Chester said this school has been in operation for 10 years and has been in and out of conditions. Deputy Commissioner Wulfson explained the renewal protocol. He said the primary concern here is academic performance, and how to convey in renewing the charter that we expect stronger and more consistent academic gains from this established charter school. Chair Banta asked if the school were renewed with conditions, when it would come back to the Board. Mr. Wulfson said typically the Department allows two years. Mr. Chertavian said his expectation is that charter schools do better than the district and keep up with the state average. Mr. Chertavian said the school's 10th graders are doing very well but it was concerning that the school said it did not teach to 7th grade standards. Mr. Chertavian said as a public school its obligation is to teach to the state standards. Mr. Chertavian said this seems to be a well integrated school, with a lot going right, but there is some disconnect.

Ms. Kaplan said the Board should be clear on the definition of conditions versus probation and the expectations for mature charter schools, so schools have adequate notice. Dr. Howard said he believes charter schools should be expected to do better than other schools. Ms. Chernow said this school does not have the organizational disarray that has prompted the Board to put other charter schools on probation. Ms. Chernow said the standard for conditions, probation, and non-renewal should be clearer. Mr. DiTullio, the Secretary's designee, said conditions placed on the school were met, and this seems to be a school receptive to conditions. Mr. DiTullio said probation means the Board has to be prepared to close the school, and in his judgment the school does not seem in position for closure. Chair Banta said these issues are judgment calls and the question is what to expect of a charter school that has been operating for 10 years.

Mr. Chertavian offered an amendment to the proposed motion so that it would refer to renewal of the charter with conditions but not probation. Ms. Kaplan seconded the motion and proposed specific language to renew the school's charter with conditions rather than probation.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:

VOTED: to amend the motion to refer to renewal of the school's charter with conditions rather than probation.

The vote was 5-4. Dr. Calderón-Rosado, Mr. DiTullio, Chair Banta, Mr. Chertavian, and Ms. Kaplan voted in support. Mr. Roach, Ms. Chernow, Dr. Howard, and Ms. Holmes voted in opposition.

On an amended motion duly made and seconded, it was:

VOTED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, in accordance with General Laws chapter 71, section 89, and 603 CMR 1.00, hereby grants a renewal to the North Central Charter Essential School, with one condition on the school's charter, for the five-year period from July 1, 2012 through June 30, 2017, as recommended by the Commissioner.

Commonwealth Charter School (Regional):

North Central Charter Essential School

Location:	Fitchburg
Districts in Region:	Ashburnham-Westminster, Clinton, Fitchburg, Gardner, Leominster, Lunenburg, Nashoba, North Middlesex, Wachusett
Maximum Enrollment:	400
Grade levels:	7-12

This charter renewal is explicitly conditioned as follows. Failure to meet these conditions may result in placing the school on probation, revocation of the charter, or imposition of additional conditions.

By December 31, 2013, North Central Charter Essential School must demonstrate academic success by:

1. Meeting academic growth targets in mathematics and English language arts, as established by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education:
2. Demonstrating improvement in absolute CPI scores; and
3. Meeting academic goals and objectives established in the school's accountability plan.

North Central Charter Essential School shall be operated in accordance with the provisions of General Laws chapter 71, section 89, and 603 CMR 1.00 and all other applicable state and federal laws and regulations and such additional conditions as the Commissioner may from time to time establish, all of which shall be deemed conditions of the charter.

The vote was 5-4. Dr. Calderón-Rosado, Mr. DiTullio, Chair Banta, Mr. Chertavian, and Ms. Kaplan voted in support. Mr. Roach, Ms. Chernow, Dr. Howard, and Ms. Holmes voted in opposition.

Information on New Charter Applicants

Commissioner Chester provided the Board with information on the new charter applicants. There were a total of six final applications. The commissioner said he would make his recommendations in February and bring those with his rationale to the February 28th regular meeting. Ms. Kaplan asked about the role of Board members at the public hearings. Commissioner Chester said the public hearing process is designed to let the public weigh in, and members would report at the February meeting on what they heard at the hearings. Ms. Kaplan suggested that the Board's Charter School Committee address the role of Board members in those hearings.

Innovation Academy Charter School: Report on Conditions and Major Amendment Request

Deputy Commissioner Wulfson provided the Board with additional data on the school's percentage of low income students, students with disabilities, and limited English proficient students. Dr. Calderón-Rosado asked about the school's outreach plan. Ms. Bagg said the school has two strategies around recruitment in Lowell.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:

VOTED: **that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, in accordance with General Laws chapter 71, section 89, and 603 CMR 1.00, hereby amend the charter granted to the following school as presented by the Commissioner:**

Innovation Academy Charter School (enrollment increase from 600 to 800 students)

Regional Charter School	
Location:	Tyngsborough
Districts in Region	Billerica, Chelmsford, Dracut, Groton-Dunstable, Littleton, Lowell, Tewksbury, Tyngsborough, and Westford
Maximum enrollment:	800
Grade levels:	5-12
Effective year:	2012-13

The vote was unanimous.

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Student Assessment and Partnership for the Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC)

Chair Banta said the Board would take up a continuing discussion of PARCC at a future meeting.

Update on Level 5 District Designation for Lawrence Public Schools

Chair Banta said the Board would take up a continuing discussion of Lawrence at the next meeting.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:

VOTED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education adjourn the meeting at 1:15 p.m., subject to the call of the chair.

The vote was unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,

Mitchell D. Chester
Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education
and Secretary to the Board

2013 minutes

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**Minutes of the Regular Meeting
of the Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education**

March 26, 2013
8:40 a.m. – 1:10 p.m.

**Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
75 Pleasant Street
Malden, MA 02148**

Members of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education Present:

Maura Banta, Chair, Melrose
Vanessa Calderón-Rosado, Milton
Ryan Casey, Chair, Student Advisory Council, Franklin
Harneen Chernow, Jamaica Plain
Gerald Chertavian, Cambridge
Matthew Malone, Secretary of Education
David Roach, Sutton

Mitchell D. Chester, Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education, Secretary to the Board

Members of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education Absent:

Beverly Holmes, Vice Chair, Springfield
Ruth Kaplan, Brookline
Pendred Noyce, Weston

Chair Banta called the meeting to order at 8:40 a.m.

Chair Banta welcomed Board members. She reported on a recent visit to Switzerland in which she represented Massachusetts on a delegation organized by the Pathways to Prosperity Network to examine the system of education and career pathways. She noted their focus on helping students apply knowledge and make connections to college and careers earlier in school. Ms. Calderón-Rosado reported that the Commissioner's Evaluation Committee is proceeding with the commissioner's evaluation and will be interviewing the commissioner's direct reports as part of a 360-degree process. She said the commissioner will complete a self-assessment and the committee expects to report to the Board in May. Secretary Malone reported on his recent visits to Codman Academy Charter School, Worcester Vocational-Technical High School, and the STEM Academy at Doherty High School. Secretary Malone announced his new communications director, Matthew Wilder. The secretary commended the commissioner for his communication practices with the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education and said he is encouraging other education boards and commissioners to follow that model.

Public Comment

1. Josh Golin and Marilyn Segal of the Campaign for a Commercial Free Childhood addressed the Board on the shared learning collaborative.

2. Maureen Vacca of the Massachusetts Family Institute addressed the Board on the guidance on gender identity.
3. Andrew Beckwith of the Massachusetts Family Institute addressed the Board on the guidance on gender identity.
4. David Stormberg, M.D., addressed the Board on the guidance on gender identity.
5. William Gillmeister of the Tantasqua School Committee addressed the Board on the guidance on gender identity.
6. Reverend John Grothjan of the North Shore Community Baptist Church addressed the Board on the guidance on gender identity.
7. Vickie Henry of Gay & Lesbian Advocates & Defenders (GLAD) addressed the Board on the guidance on gender identity.
8. Athena Edmonds, a parent, addressed the Board on the guidance on gender identity.
9. Zach Kerr, a student, addressed the Board on the guidance on gender identity.
10. Roger Bourgeois, Superintendent of Essex Agricultural and Technical School, addressed the Board on the guidance on gender identity.

Comments from the Commissioner

Commissioner Chester said gender identity was made a protected classification by the General Court in the law that was enacted in 2011, which included public school facilities for students. He noted that the Board adopted amendments to the Equal Educational Opportunity regulations in 2012. The commissioner said the Department then convened school officials, advocates, and others with experience in these issues to prepare guidance that would respond to questions from school administrators. Commissioner Chester said guidance means guidance, and the core idea is to use common sense to address individual situations and ensure a safe and supportive learning environment for all students. Responding to statements from some speakers that the Department had shown courage in issuing the guidelines, Commissioner Chester said students such as Zach and the parents and educators who are working with them are the ones who should get credit for courage.

The commissioner noted that the college and career readiness definition has now been adopted by both the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education and the Board of Higher Education. He said he has convened a Career and Vocational Technical Education Taskforce to review policies concerning these schools and programs and the Board will receive a report later in the year. Commissioner Chester also reported on two recent conferences, the International Summit on the Teaching Profession and the Council of Chief State School Officers legislative conference.

Approval of the Minutes

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:

VOTED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education approve the minutes of the February 25, 2013 Special Meeting and February 26, 2013 Regular Meeting.

② The vote was unanimous.

Report on EEC-ESE Joint Initiatives and EEC's Early Learning Challenge Grants under Race to the Top – Discussion

Commissioner Chester welcomed Tom Weber, Acting Commissioner of Early Education and Care (EEC). Mr. Weber introduced his staff members Chau Ly, Sarah Harding, and Brad Kramer. Ms. Ly gave the Board an overview of the Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge Grant. She said EEC's priority areas are program quality, educator quality, screening and assessments, family and community engagement, and infrastructure.

Bob Bickerton, Senior Associate Commissioner of Assessment and Learning at ESE, outlined EEC- ESE collaborations as birth-to-grade three strategy development; the Massachusetts Kindergarten Entry Assessment; aligning preschool standards to the Massachusetts curriculum frameworks; developing preschool science, technology and engineering learning standards and guidelines; an adult, child and family literacy partnership with IBM; and early childhood special education. Donna Traynham, Coordinator of Learning Support Programs at ESE, said the Department has been working with EEC since its creation to develop a strategy to close achievement gaps and reach grade three literacy goals. Ms. Traynham said Massachusetts was the first state to add preschool standards into the curriculum frameworks and noted that the kindergarten assessments would help inform a teacher's instruction. Mr. Weber said EEC-ESE collaboration is happening at a very high level of quality and commitment.

Chair Banta asked about the role of the Department of Higher Education (DHE) in preparing early childhood teachers. Ms. Ly said the Race to the Top grant allowed EEC to partner with DHE to train educators on the Massachusetts frameworks and align the curriculum of certificate programs. Ms. Harding said there are education provider support grants for professional development and certificate pathways to an associate's or bachelor's degree for early education providers. Ms. Calderón-Rosado said her organization offers a bilingual preschool program and that retaining educators with higher qualifications is challenging because early education programs often lose them to school districts. Mr. Weber said a professional development registry is being developed to track data on workforce preparation and Governor Patrick's budget proposal would put \$30 million towards compensation for early childhood educators, which is key to retaining them.

Mr. Bickerton said the prekindergarten-higher education longitudinal data system would allow educators to see how their students are doing at every level. Mr. Kramer said EEC is collaborating with the MA Department of Mental Health on an early childhood mental initiative. In response to a question from Ms. Chernow, Acting Commissioner Weber said there are 441,000 children age 0-5 in Massachusetts, 230,000 are connected with EEC, 51,000 receive subsidized care, and 30,000 are on the waiting list. Secretary Malone said the ongoing collaboration among EEC, ESE, and DHE will make Massachusetts more likely to meet its goal of having students achieve reading proficiency by grade three.

Progress Report on Integrating College and Career Readiness – Discussion

Commissioner Chester gave an overview and introduced Patricia Gregson, Associate Commissioner of Vocational, Workforce, and College Readiness Programs, and Keith Westrich, Director of College and Career Readiness Programs, who reported on the

Department's work since October 2012 to implement the recommendations of the Board's Taskforce on Integrating College and Career Readiness. The taskforce was chaired by Board member Gerald Chertavian. Ms. Gregson and Mr. Westrich went through a presentation that included: defining the career development spectrum, developing a delivery plan to realize the taskforce recommendations, working to increase the number of high schools offering career development activities, increasing employer sponsors, and establishing an advisory group.

Secretary Malone commended the work and the Department's ongoing collaboration with DHE, the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development, and the Workforce Investment Boards on career-workforce development.

Secretary Malone left at 11:15 a.m.

Mr. Roach recommended outreach to superintendents and school principals about the MA Model for Comprehensive School Counseling. In response to a question about incentive grants, Mr. Westrich said 4-6 grants would be available to districts that will implement all the taskforce recommendations as a pilot so others can learn from them. Chair Banta said Employer Champions will be key to the initiative. Mr. Chertavian said it is important to lower transaction costs for businesses so more will get involved in working with schools and students. He added that there are ways besides internships to give young people exposure to work and career pathways.

Update on PARCC – Discussion

Commissioner Chester and Mr. Bickerton made a presentation on the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC). The commissioner gave an overview of the Board's authority to set standards for academic performance, graduation requirements, and assessments, and discussed the progress Massachusetts students have made since 2002. Mr. Bickerton updated the Board on the transition to the 2011 Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks for English Language Arts and Mathematics and anticipated changes in assessment. Mr. Bickerton presented the PARCC design for a next-generation assessment system anchored in college- and career-readiness. He explained PARCC will provide an array of tools to support teaching and learning.

Chair Banta asked how the Department is helping educators implement the new curriculum frameworks. Mr. Bickerton said the initiatives to assist teachers include Edwin Teaching and Learning, model curriculum units, the partnership with WGBH, and curriculum-embedded performance assessments. Ms. Chernow asked if MCAS and PARCC tests will be administered at the same time. Mr. Bickerton said we do not intend to give students two sets of tests, and details will be worked out. Commissioner Chester said districts currently use a variety of student assessments beyond MCAS, and PARCC is designed to be an integrated system that will replace many existing parts for greater efficiency.

Commissioner Chester said MCAS was never designed to assess readiness for college and careers, and high school graduation will continue to be based on the grade 10 standards as provided in state law. The commissioner said Massachusetts higher education institutions have agreed to honor PARCC achievement at a certain level as an

for a college-readiness benchmark. Mr. Chertavian said there is a need for a secondary education assessment that is accepted by higher education, and he is glad to see this happening in Massachusetts. He noted that the Board set a high standard in 2003 and students have shown they can meet it. Mr. DiTullio asked if PARCC results would appear on a high school transcript. Commissioner Chester said this would require a regulatory change.

Ms. Chernow asked if the standards for the graduation requirement would differ from the standards for college readiness. Commissioner Chester said these are core questions, and the two standards would likely differ. Mr. Chertavian said the current situation is not good for students who graduate from high school and find they are not ready for college-level work. The commissioner said PARCC would give students early signals so they can prepare.

Mr. Roach asked what would happen to eighth graders in the spring of 2014 under the transition to PARCC. Commissioner Chester said some sample testing and comparative data would be needed to determine if PARCC is ready. He said PARCC should help with educator evaluation because it would be aligned with the new curriculum frameworks. The commissioner noted that student academic growth is only one factor in educator evaluation and MCAS is a vital barometer right now. Commissioner Chester said he expects the Board will be discussing many issues relating to PARCC in the months ahead. Mr. Chertavian said he is very supportive of this work, while recognizing how challenging it is. He asked the commissioner to keep the focus on career readiness as well as academic readiness.

Using Student Data to Improve Instruction: Report on State Initiatives to Assist Schools and Districts – Discussion

Commissioner Chester said a major strategy to enhance teaching and learning in the classroom is better use of student-level data. He introduced Deputy Commissioner Jeff Wulfson, Robert Curtin, Director of Education Data Services, and Sharon Wright, Chief Information Officer at the Executive Office of Education. Mr. Wulfson said technology touches on all of the Department's core strategies. Mr. Curtin said the use of data is changing, including its incorporation into the classroom to improve instruction. Mr. Curtin gave the Board an overview of the Edwin teaching and learning system, the Edwin analytics system, and the Department's collaboration with InBloom. Mr. Wulfson said most districts already contract for services with a variety of commercial vendors, and the Department's initiatives have the potential to reduce costs and increase efficiency while meeting a high standard of data privacy consistent with legal requirements. Ms. Chernow asked for clarification regarding the access vendors will have to student data.

Mr. Curtin explained Massachusetts is one of nine pilot states in the inBloom initiative, which would provide a common platform for student data. He said the participating districts would retain full control over how their student data is to be used or shared. Ms. Wright said the project is still in the development stages. She clarified that the memorandum of understanding between InBloom and ESE has been extended and it requires compliance with FERPA data security requirements. Ms. Chernow said she still has further questions and needs more information as many parents have contacted her expressing concern about the use of student data under this program. Commissioner

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Chester said the Department is trying to find the right role in an ever changing technology system, and some districts are far ahead of others. He said the discussion of data initiatives, including data security, will continue at future Board meetings.

Ms. Calderón-Rosado left at 1:00 p.m.

Update on State and Federal Education Budget – Discussion

Bill Bell, Chief Financial Officer of the Department, said the House Ways and Means Committee will release their FY14 budget in two weeks. He said federal departments are looking at the impacts of sequestration, including \$2.5 billion in cuts to the U.S. Department of Education, which would mean \$30 million in cuts to Massachusetts K-12 education. Commissioner Chester said the 5 percent across-the-board cut is not equal in all districts; some will have small reductions while others face double-digit cuts. He also noted the impact on Title I school turnaround funds and on the Department, where over half the staff positions are federally funded.

Chair Banta thanked Board members and presenters for the valuable discussion.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:

VOTED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education adjourn the meeting at 1:10 p.m., subject to the call of the chair.

The vote was unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,

Mitchell D. Chester
Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education
and Secretary to the Board

**Minutes of the Regular Meeting
of the Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education**

September 24, 2013

8:40 am- 12:50 pm

**Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
75 Pleasant Street, Malden, MA**

Members of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education Present:

Maura Banta, Chair, Melrose
Daniel Brogan, Chair, Student Advisory Council, Dennis
Vanessa Calderón-Rosado, Milton
Harneen Chernow, Jamaica Plain
Karen Daniels, Milton
Ruth Kaplan, Brookline
Matthew Malone, Secretary of Education
Pendred Noyce, Weston
David Roach, Sutton

Mitchell D. Chester, Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education, Secretary to the Board

Chair Banta called the meeting to order at 8:40 a.m.

Comments from the Chair

Chair Banta welcomed Board members to the first meeting of the 2013-2014 school year. She thanked Board members for volunteering their participation on various committees and announced that Daniel Brogan, Karen Daniels, Ruth Kaplan, and David Roach will serve along with the Chair on the budget committee. Chair Banta said the Board will schedule a planning retreat sometime after new members are appointed to two seats that are currently vacant, and she anticipates a joint meeting in the future with the Board of Early Education and Care. Chair Banta welcomed Daniel Brogan, the chair of the student advisory committee. She thanked him for being the voice of the students across the state and for dedicating his time to the Board.

Comments from the Commissioner

Commissioner Chester welcomed Board members. The Commissioner said the recent release of MCAS results shows that Massachusetts has a lot to celebrate. The Commissioner recently joined Governor Patrick and Secretary Malone at the Orchard Gardens School in Boston, an "underperforming" or Level 4 school named in 2010 that exited Level 4 status this year as a result of dramatic improvement over the past three years. In fact, the Commissioner noted, the majority of Level 4 schools made substantial progress over the past three years.

Commissioner Chester congratulated Worcester Technical High School Principal Sheila Harrity on her selection as National High School Principal of the Year by the National Association of Secondary School Principals. The Commissioner announced that he has released Gill-Montague from Level 4 status for making sustained progress and stabilizing the district's budget and

leadership. Commissioner Chester updated the Board on the vocational-technical education work group, which will present recommendations later this fall. The Commissioner informed the Board of upcoming Department conferences, including a meeting of charter leaders around access and equity issues and the sixth annual Curriculum & Instruction Summit.

Comments from the Secretary

Secretary Malone said he has continued to visit schools across the Commonwealth and he has seen encouraging spirit, motivation, and effective practices that are reflected in this year's positive MCAS results. Secretary Malone said the Board has heard from the field that initiatives are coming at them too fast, but with the support of the Department, districts are implementing these initiatives thoughtfully and effectively. Secretary Malone said Innovation Schools and other School Redesign models are yielding results. The Secretary noted that the ongoing collaboration among the Departments of Early Education and Care, Elementary and Secondary Education, and Higher Education is producing real alignment across the education continuum.

Public Comment

1. Representative James Lyons addressed the Board on the guidelines on gender identity.
2. Donna Colorio of the Worcester School Committee addressed the Board on the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers.
3. Melody Phelps of the Gardner School Committee addressed the Board on the guidelines on gender identity.
4. Kelly Kulsrud of Strategies for Children addressed the Board on student performance in English Language Arts at the lower grades.

Approval of the Minutes

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:

VOTED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education approve the minutes of the June 24, 2013 Special Meeting and June 25, 2013 Regular Meeting.

The vote was unanimous.

Annual Meeting: Election of Vice-Chair

Chair Banta asked Board members for their nominations. Mr. Roach nominated Harneen Chernow and Ms. Noyce seconded the motion.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:

VOTED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education elect Harneen Chernow to serve as Vice-Chair of the Board, in accordance with Article I of the By-Laws.

The vote was unanimous.

2012-13 Achievement and Accountability Overview

Chair Banta said last night's special meeting on the 2013 assessment and accountability results was extremely informative and productive. The Chair said schools are doing well, but not all are

seeing the same level of sustained improvement. She said too many students are leaving high school unprepared and are placed into remedial higher education courses, and grade 3 and 4 reading performance continues to be a concern. Chair Banta said the presentation on Level 4 and Level 5 decisions was excellent and showed the importance of early adoption of effective strategies and fidelity in implementing them.

Ms. Chernow said the special meeting was a great presentation and discussion. She asked for clarification on the steps for schools remaining in Level 4 and the determination process for continued flexibilities. Commissioner Chester said the Achievement Gap Act anticipated that schools released from Level 4 would need continued assistance. He noted that schools and districts outline what components of their turnaround plan need to be sustained. The Commissioner said the state is committed to ensuring that schools moving out of underperforming status do not end up in the same scenario a year or two later. Mr. Roach said he is concerned about the capacity of the Department to execute this critical work without adequate budget support. He asked about reliance on outside contractors. Commissioner Chester said the Department has partnered with organizations that have expertise in accountability research and evaluation, and a history of successful turnaround work.

Commissioner Chester said the Board heard a lot of data and metrics at the special meeting. The Commissioner said he is proud that under the Board's leadership, Massachusetts has developed an accountability system that identifies problematic areas and provides assistance directly to schools and districts. He said that performance tracking is an obligation to do better for our students. Secretary Malone commended the Department for providing worthwhile assistance that is making a difference for schools. The Secretary said districts rely on the Department's capacity to assist them with turnaround efforts and implementing initiatives.

Educator Evaluation: Update on Implementation and Proposed Technical Amendment to Regulations

Commissioner Chester reminded the Board of its role in the educator evaluation process, including convening a taskforce to inform the policies that the Board adopted through its regulations. The Commissioner said today's vote is related to the implementation of the educator evaluation framework and would authorize the Commissioner to adjust dates in the regulation for good cause. The vote today will release the proposed regulations for public comment. The Commissioner said the Department is responding to concerns from the field to ensure that evaluations are done well. Commissioner Chester said the 2013-2014 school year would be a pilot year for the impact of student performance and district determined measures. He said the Department is providing a variety of resources to districts to support their work in this area.

Associate Commissioner Heather Peske said there has been much progress on educator evaluations since the report last spring. She said the Department has been committed to providing supports to educators and districts such as model District-Determined Measures (DDMs), professional development, curriculum support, and training for evaluators. Ms. Peske said the regulations are designed to phase in evaluation processes over time. She gave an overview of the system and the timelines, as set forth in the Commissioner's memo to the Board. Ms. Peske said the original timeline for implementing DDMs was September 2013, but the Department wants to ensure districts have time to understand and implement the process well.

Mr. Roach said he is concerned with the capacity of the districts to implement this part of the evaluation system. He said the first model guide for DDMs was released a week ago. Ms. Peske said the first guide the Department issued was seen as too technical so the Department created an updated guide. Commissioner Chester said in hindsight the timeline was not realistic and the

Department is working to correct this. Mr. Roach said districts vary in their capacity to build middle management to support the evaluations. Ms. Peske said working group sessions have been ongoing and the Department is continuing to provide resources.

Secretary Malone said that he understands there are concerns from the field, which are now being addressed and brought forward through this proposed regulatory change. He said the educator evaluations have put pressure on districts, and allowing for flexibility will ensure they can walk before running. Ms. Chernow said she is pleased to see the proposed change, because the goal is a valid process that improves teaching and learning. Ms. Chernow asked about the status of contracts. Ms. Peske said 26 percent of districts adopted the model language that the Department and statewide professional associations produced last year, 68 percent made slight changes to the model language, and 7 have not submitted. Commissioner Chester said the Department is continuing to work with the statewide associations on model contract language and the effort may or may not be successful.

Dr. Calderón-Rosado asked about the use of student feedback. Ms. Peske said the Department is in the process of developing model instruments for 2014, as well as focus groups piloting the use of student feedback. Ms. Kaplan said she is concerned that the messaging around the “needs improvement” category should be clear. Commissioner Chester said the prior state of evaluations labeled the vast majority of educators as exemplary and provided little or no meaningful feedback. He said the new system and rubrics are designed to be more discerning and contribute to professional growth and continuous improvement.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:

VOTED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, in accordance with M.G.L. c. 69, § 38, hereby authorize the Commissioner to proceed in accordance with the Administrative Procedure Act, G.L. c. 30A, § 3, to solicit public comment on the proposed amendment to the Regulations on Evaluation of Educators, 603 CMR 35, as presented by the Commissioner. The proposed amendment would add a new section 35.11 (10), allowing the Commissioner to adjust dates in the regulations for good cause.

The vote was unanimous.

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Initial Discussion of Plan for Administering MCAS and PARCC Student Assessments

Commissioner Chester said he expects to have a series of discussions with the Board this fall about PARCC, beginning today, and he will keep the Board informed about the assessment development. He said he expects to ask the Board in November to vote on a timeline for a two-year transition to PARCC. Senior Associate Commissioner Bob Bickerton presented a PowerPoint outlining the Board’s statutory requirement to set state standards for student academic performance, standards for high school graduation, and adopting assessment systems. Mr. Bickerton reminded the Board of their involvement in adopting the curriculum frameworks and the 2010 updates to the English language arts, writing, and mathematics standards.

Commissioner Chester said PARCC is focused on course-specific standards leading to college and career readiness and provides opportunities for students to demonstrate their mastery of skills and abilities, where current assessments fall short. The Commissioner stated that the collaboration between K-12 and higher education is unprecedented, and higher education has made a commitment to the assessment. Mr. Bickerton gave the Board an overview of the PARCC field test. He said students were randomly selected; superintendents were notified in

September; and there will be two testing windows using either the computer based or paper-and-pencil test.

Ms. Chernow noted concern that some districts have the technology capabilities and others do not. Commissioner Chester said the variation in technology is substantial; some buildings have broadband and a one-to-one initiative and some do not even have a basic broadband connection. He said the Department is working with the federal government and the Massachusetts School Building Authority to ensure all schools have adequate levels of technology. Secretary Malone noted that there is great disparity with regards to technology and we must be flexible with our expectations. Mr. Bickerton said the time commitment for the performance and end of year assessments in English language arts and mathematics is slightly over ten hours. Ms. Noyce asked for the estimated cost per student. Commissioner Chester said the estimate depends on the number of students taking the test, but is currently fifteen dollars. Mr. Brogan cautioned about the potential for students to hack the online test.

Commissioner Chester said this is the first of several conversations with the Board about PARCC. He reminded Board members that in 2008 there was a re-bid on a new assessment for Massachusetts that incorporated online items, but with deep budget cuts it was not possible to proceed. He said collaborating with other states in the PARCC consortium in developing the assessment significantly decreases our cost, while allowing for a high quality assessment that will improve instruction.

Report on the Status of the Public Education Financing System in Massachusetts

Deputy Commissioner Jeff Wulfson said the status report was mandated by the Achievement Gap Act and provides an overview of the Chapter 70 program, including the history, key provisions, and examination of the aid distribution. Roger Hatch, Director of School Finance, said the funding formula ensures adequate and equitable school funding for all students. Mr. Hatch said the Chapter 70 formula has three major components: a foundation budget, local contribution, and net school spending. Each community's ability to pay differs depending on their local wealth, which is determined by property values and personal income. Chair Banta asked if additional funds are given to districts for English language learners. Ms. Noyce asked how funding is decided per student for low income or English language learner status. Mr. Hatch said the foundation budget provides an additional increment, although it is difficult to measure actual cost. Mr. Wulfson said categories are set up by accounting codes, while new data systems could link spending and other educational and qualitative data the Department collects. Secretary Malone said special education funding often sets up a fight between parents and districts over services because of funding, not over what is best for the child. He said ensuring the 95 percent funding requirement is met, is a way to address this. Mr. Wulfson said the 95 percent funding requirements should not be a starting point for districts, 100 percent of net school spending should be the goal.

Secretary Malone left the meeting at 12:00 noon. James DiTullio, the Secretary's designee, represented Secretary Malone for the duration of the meeting.

Commissioner Chester said on average, 70 percent of a district's budget is spent on salaries. He said the Chapter 70 formula does not direct how the funds are spent, and noted that more senior, most costly teachers are often in schools with fewer low-income students and ELLs. Commissioner Chester said the state funds 95 percent of the Lawrence school budget, the largest state contribution. He said Lawrence's teacher compensation plan is a new approach to looking at district allocations. Commissioner Chester said there is very little correlation between spending levels and student performance.

RETELL Update

Commissioner Chester reminded Board members that in order to improve instruction for ELLs, and ultimately to improve their achievement, the Department introduced the Sheltered English Instruction endorsement (SEI) for teachers and administrators. He said after the first round of courses the Department substantially revamped the course based upon the feedback. The Department is committed to training 30,000 educators over four years and enrolled 10,000 this school year.

Jonathan Landman, Associate Commissioner for Teaching and Learning, said 100 new instructors have been trained and are now available for this fall. He said an online course registration is now available and information has gone to the field. Chair Banta said a teacher has shared her experience of the training with her, and is on a first name basis with Department staff because of the responsiveness, outreach, and planning. Ms. Kaplan asked if educator preparation programs are part of the pathways to endorsement. Mr. Landman said yes, that the preparation program requirements are built into the regulations. Mr. Roach said the evaluation report recommendations were substantial. He expressed concern about difficulties in the pilot phase of the training for 2000 educators. Commissioner Chester said the Department is committed to continuous improvement, and has learned from the pilot. Ms. Noyce said this is moving in the right direction and commended the Department for being responsive to the critical evaluation.

Regulations on Background Checks for School Employees

Commissioner Chester said he believes Massachusetts is the last state to pass a national background check law for educators. He said the Federal Bureau of Investigations required the state to make changes to the law in order to have access to their database. Commissioner Chester said emergency regulations would need to be adopted in order for the new legislation to be implemented this fall. He said major stakeholders have given feedback, and a vendor to administer the fingerprinting has been chosen. Ms. Kaplan asked if school volunteers would be required to receive a national background check, which might dissuade school volunteers due to the cost. Deputy Commissioner Wulfson said it is a discretionary decision for the district to make. Mr. DiTullio said this initiative has been a massive undertaking of the Department and Department of Early Education and Care. He said there will be challenges with having over 100,000 educators and school personnel fingerprinted, but this is the right thing to do to ensure the safety of our students. He said the departments will continue to work with the field on this. Mr. Brogan asked about the type of background information districts would receive. Department legal counsel Lucy Wall responded that they will receive criminal history data other than juvenile or sealed convictions. Mr. Wulfson said districts are responsible for setting a policy for decision making on the data they receive.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:

VOTED: **that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, in accordance with G.L. chapter 69, § 1B and chapter 71, § 38R, as amended by St. 2013, c 77, hereby adopt the Regulations on Criminal History Checks for School Employees, 603 CMR 51.00, as presented by the Commissioner.**

Further, in accordance with the Administrative Procedure Act, G.L. c. 30A, § 3, the Board finds that the immediate adoption of these regulations is necessary for the preservation of public safety and general welfare, and that observance of the requirements of prior notice and public comment would be

contrary to the public interest. The Board directs the Commissioner to provide notice and an opportunity for public comment on the emergency regulations, in accordance with the requirements of G.L. c. 30A, §3, within the next three months.

The vote was unanimous.

Process and Timelines for FY2015 Budget

Bill Bell, the Department's CFO, provided an overview of the FY2015 budget timeline and process. He said federal sequestration will play a role in planning. Chair Banta said the budget committee is a useful tool for understanding the budget process and transmitting the priorities of the Board and the Department. Commissioner Chester said the Board will vote on priorities at the November meeting.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:

VOTED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education adjourn the meeting at 12:50 p.m., subject to the call of the chair.

The vote was unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,

Mitchell D. Chester
Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education
and Secretary to the Board

**Minutes of the Regular Meeting
of the Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education**

**October 22, 2013
8:35 am- 12:20 pm**

**Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
75 Pleasant Street, Malden, MA**

Members of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education Present:

Maura Banta, Chair, Melrose
Harneen Chernow, Vice-Chair, Jamaica Plain
Daniel Brogan, Chair, Student Advisory Council, Dennis
Vanessa Calderón-Rosado, Milton
Karen Daniels, Milton
Matthew Malone, Secretary of Education
Pendred Noyce, Weston
David Roach, Sutton

Mitchell D. Chester, Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education, Secretary to the Board

Member of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education Absent:

Ruth Kaplan, Brookline

Chair Banta called the meeting to order at 8:35 am.

Comments from the Chair

Chair Banta welcomed members of the Board and the public to the meeting. The chair said she recently attended the Education Nation Summit, where the key topics were curriculum standards and equitable education. Chair Banta noted her recent visit to the Lawrence schools with Commissioner Chester and the co-chairs of the Joint Committee on Education. She said they visited classrooms with Receiver/Superintendent Jeff Riley and saw a number of impressive initiatives that are underway.

Comments from the Commissioner

Commissioner Chester said the College Board recently released the 2013 SAT results and Massachusetts students are among the top students in the nation in terms of performance and participation. Commissioner Chester noted the CCSSO grant awarded to the Department to work with the Department of Higher Education and six other states to strengthen educator preparation. The commissioner gave a brief update on educator evaluation; he said 270 districts so far have sent in their initial plans on using district-determined measures as a component of educator evaluation, and over 100 are going beyond the minimum of five key academic areas. He said the Department is continuing to work with districts to align curriculum, assessment, and evaluation in a coherent way to strengthen teaching and learning. Commissioner Chester noted two informational memos in the Board packet: an overview of charter authorizing and the anticipated

schedule for the coming year, and a report on scheduling of comprehensive audits and reviews. He distributed two recent columns on the Common Core State Standards.

Chair Banta asked for reports from the Board's committees. Ms. Calderón-Rosado said the charter school committee met to discuss proposed changes to the charter school regulations, access and equity issues, and the pilot of a charter school data tool. She said the meeting was very informative. Ms. Chernow said the work of the Task Force on Integrating College and Career Readiness is moving forward through an advisory committee that is working with the Department to build partnerships with workforce boards around the state. She said the advisory committee would like to see restoration of the connecting activities line item in the state budget at \$7 million, to support public-private partnerships connecting students and schools with workplace learning.

Public Comment

1. Superintendent Pia Durkin of the New Bedford Public Schools addressed the Board on reform efforts in New Bedford.
2. Neil Sullivan of the Boston Private Industry Council addressed the Board on connecting activities.
3. Paul Toner, President of the Massachusetts Teachers Association, addressed the Board on Common Core implementation.
4. Mary Jo Rossetti and Adam Sweeting of the Somerville School Committee addressed the Board on PARCC.
5. Ann O'Halloran of Citizens for Public Schools addressed the Board on PARCC.
6. Catherine Tighe and Chris Wright, teachers affiliated with Teach Plus, addressed the Board on Common Core and PARCC.
7. Steve Hemman of the MA Association of Regional Schools addressed the Board on the fiscal year 2015 budget and regional schools.
8. Barbara Donnelly, a Boston parent, addressed the Board on the Dever Elementary School Level 5 designation.
9. Donna Lashus, a Boston parent, addressed the Board on the John Holland Elementary School Level 5 designation.
10. Maria Walzer addressed the Board on the Ukrainian genocide and the report of the Global Education Advisory Council.

Approval of Minutes

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:

VOTED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education approve the minutes of the September 23, 2013 special meeting and the September 24, 2013 regular meeting

The vote was unanimous.

Plan for Administering MCAS and PARCC Assessments

Commissioner Chester said this is a continuation of the review and discussion of PARCC (Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers) that the Board began in September, in anticipation of the Board's vote in November on a proposed transition plan for

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moving from MCAS to PARCC. The commissioner clarified that the vote is not on whether to adopt PARCC as the Commonwealth's student assessment program, but rather on the transition plan leading up to that decision. He said the Board would hear about what makes PARCC a rigorous and high quality assessment and how it is aligned to the curriculum frameworks, and hear from three of the educators who are serving as PARCC fellows. Commissioner Chester introduced Senior Associate Commissioner Bob Bickerton, who presented an overview of the process for developing test items and introduced the three PARCC fellows to talk about their engagement with the PARCC initiative and walk the Board through a comparison of sample test questions in mathematics and writing.

Mary Beth Banios, assistant superintendent of Shrewsbury Public Schools and a Massachusetts PARCC educator leader fellow, said in her experience teachers are pleased with the rigor of the new standards for curriculum and assessment. Ms. Banios showed the Board a grade 7 writing prompt, which requires students to develop an argument and support it with textual evidence. She said she met with representatives from Worcester State University, who agree that this type of thinking is what students need to know for success in college.

Darren Burris, mathematics teacher at Boston Collegiate Charter School and a Massachusetts PARCC educator leader fellow, said in his experience teachers would like to have more PARCC sample items. He said mathematics teachers favor the more challenging and interesting assessment questions. Mr. Burris said teachers know MCAS is a quality assessment, and also that it is not necessarily an indicator that students are ready for college. Mr. Burris walked the Board through a PARCC grade 5 mathematics test item. He said a major difference is that the PARCC assessment includes visual aids and tools built directly into the question, and students have to show their work as well as the answer.

Commissioner Chester said a major shift in the Massachusetts curriculum frameworks is a more deliberate progression of skills through the grades, such as students' conceptual understanding of proportional reasoning. Mr. Burris said having fewer standards allows educators to go more in depth to focus on the development of skills.

Christine Shaw, executive director of Northeast Regional Readiness Center at Salem State University and a Massachusetts PARCC educator leader fellow, said Massachusetts is one of a few states that included a higher education fellow in PARCC development. She said engagement teams have been used at campuses statewide to discuss our curriculum frameworks and PARCC. Ms. Shaw said the rigor of test questions and the analysis needed to answer the questions is exactly what colleges expect from their students. Ms. Shaw said the new curriculum standards and assessment should help to open up access for all students.

Mr. Bickerton said PARCC's commitments to assessment rigor and quality include: ensure that students engage with texts and focus on core math standards at each grade; use authentic texts that are worthy of study; include multi-step problems, conceptual questions, and rigorous real world applications; ensure multiple reviews of every item by educators, content, and assessment experts; and adhere to the standards so expectations remain the same in both instructional and assessment settings. The Board reviewed PARCC items for grade 5 English language arts, grade 6 mathematics, and algebra I. Mr. Bickerton said the item review process includes K-12 educators, higher education, and other interested parties from the PARCC states. He also outlined PARCC supports for teaching and learning, such as diagnostic and speaking and listening assessments.

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Commissioner Chester outlined the proposed PARCC timeline for Massachusetts. In response to a question from Mr. Roach, the commissioner said he expects that by the spring of 2015, a number of the states participating in PARCC will cease using their legacy student assessment tests in favor of the PARCC assessment. Under the timeline the commissioner is proposing, the Board would vote in the fall of 2015 on whether to adopt PARCC for Massachusetts.

Chair Banta thanked the presenters and said the Board will devote part or all of its special meeting on November 18 to a continuing discussion of PARCC.

Secretary Malone joined the meeting at 10:25 a.m.

Comments from the Secretary

Secretary Malone said he was just at a Boston Chamber of Commerce event at which Governor Patrick spoke about the need to invest in education. He said the Commonwealth has had ten consecutive years of growth. Secretary Malone said we have more work to do around closing achievement gaps, third and fourth grade literacy, and access to high quality early education. Secretary Malone said he has been visiting schools around the state including rural and vocational-technical schools. He said the continued discussion about PARCC is valuable. Secretary Malone thanked the Department for its outreach to the professional associations and the education field generally.

Update on Science Curriculum Framework

Commissioner Chester gave the Board an outline of the revision process and anticipated next steps for the Science and Technology/Engineering (STE) Curriculum Framework. He said the Department convened a review panel in 2009 and it has worked closely with the multi-state Next Generation Science Standards Advisory Group, which was convened in 2011. The commissioner said the Department plans to make the draft standards available to the field and the public for review and consultation during this school year and through the 2014-15 school year.

Jake Foster, of the Department's curriculum and instruction office, said the standards incorporate real world content, science and engineering practices, and national research. He explained that the STE standards overlap with English language arts and mathematics skills, feature coherent progressions of learning grade by grade, and integrate practices and content. Chair Banta said the Board appreciates that the Department is taking a measured approach to engaging the field with the draft standards over an extended period of time, in recognition of various other initiatives that are being implemented.

Board of Elementary and Secondary Education FY15 Budget Proposal and Report from the Board's Budget Committee

Chair Banta said the Board's budget committee met and reviewed the budget calendar and education line item funding from 2005 to 2014. Commissioner Chester said the Board will vote on the budget proposal at the November meeting, in order to provide timely input to the Secretary and Governor for the FY15 budget. Deputy Commissioner Jeff Wulfson said the amount of funding for discretionary programs is only about 1 percent of the \$4 billion state education budget, to cover many initiatives that are priorities for the Board and the Legislature. He said the Department works with the Executive Office of Administration and Finance and the Committees on Ways and Means throughout the process. Mr. Wulfson said over half of the

Department's staff positions are federally funded, which is a real concern in light of sequestration, the expiration of Race to the Top funding in 18 months, and other anticipated federal budget cuts. The budget committee will meet again next month and will present its recommendation to the Board at the November 19 meeting.

High School Equivalency Credential: Overview and Current Activities

Commissioner Chester said the Department's Office of Adult and Community Learning Services (ACLS) oversees the administration of a high school equivalency assessment through a network of 28 local testing centers, located in adult learning centers, community colleges, and public schools. He said the GED test will no longer be in operation as of January 2014, as it is being replaced by three possible tests. He said the Department is reviewing the three responses to our request for proposals for a high school equivalency test. The commissioner introduced Deputy Commissioner Wulfson and Anne Serino, the Department's director of ACLS. Mr. Wulfson said there is understandable uncertainty in the field about which test will be chosen and the technology needed to administer the test.

Ms. Noyce asked for data on students who pass the high school equivalency test and their success in higher education. Anne Serino said we will have the data in the near future, based on the national student clearinghouse and the Edwin system; though we know that many GED recipients who enroll in high education end up in developmental courses. She said in 2012 about 11,000 people in the Commonwealth took the equivalency test in English and 800 in Spanish. She said about one-third of the test takers are under age 20. Ms. Calderón-Rosado asked if the new criteria would integrate college and career readiness. Mr. Wulfson said all three proposals align to the new state standards and also address technology, accommodations, and the overall ability to administer a testing program.

Secretary Malone said this is a topic that many struggle with because adult education is very different than the need for a high school diploma, particularly for the 16-19 age group. Secretary Malone suggested that the Department and the Executive Office of Education consider ways to ensure pathways for older teens, including alternative high schools and gateway high schools, so they do not assume the GED is the best or only pathway.

Update on Level 5 Schools

Commissioner Chester said he has identified four underperforming (Level 4) schools from the 2010 cohort for consideration for a Level 5 designation: Dever Elementary School and Holland Elementary School in Boston; Morgan Full Service Community School in Holyoke, and John Avery Parker Elementary School in New Bedford. Commissioner Chester said he convened public meetings at each school, which included extensive discussions with union presidents, mayors, superintendents, teachers, and parents. He said he has substantial concerns about the students of these schools, which still show very low academic performance even after three years of turnaround efforts. The Commissioner outlined the process that occurs after schools are identified as Level 5.

Ms. Daniels said she attended one of the meetings in Boston, which was very emotional for the school community. She said the children must be the top concern, and the performance of the schools is disturbing. Ms. Chernow said she attended one of the Boston meetings and heard that while many changes have occurred, the current initiatives seem to be working. She said it was unclear to the school how an outside operator or management company would change the school.

Ms. Calderón-Rosado said she understands the anxiety of the community, but the data show that something must be done now. She asked about the resources available to a Level 5 school. Commissioner Chester said he has been listening to what is working in the schools, and the turnaround plan would build upon those assets.

Secretary Malone Senior Associate Commissioner Lynda Foisy and her team for their work with underperforming schools. He said this work is difficult but the commissioner has been listening carefully and asking community members to come forward with comments on what should be done better at the school. Ms. Noyce asked about low-income data for the schools. Commissioner Chester said all types of data have been considered, and low income status is not determinative of a child's success. He said while there is an overall correlation between poverty and academic results, other schools in the first cohort of Level 4 schools with similar demographics made significant progress. Commissioner Chester said he enters this work with humility and with the conviction that we do not have to settle for poor outcomes for low-income students. He said he feels an obligation to improve the conditions for the students, because their lack of skills will have lasting consequences.

Mr. Roach had to leave the meeting at 12:10 p.m.

Proposed Delegation of Authority to Commissioner to Approve Management Contracts for Two Horace Mann Charter Schools

Commissioner Chester gave a brief overview. He said in February 2011, the Board granted a charter to UP Academy Charter School of Boston (UP Boston) and in February 2013, the Board granted a second charter to the board of trustees of UP Boston to establish a second Horace Mann charter school in Boston, UP Academy Charter School of Dorchester (UP Dorchester). For both schools, the board of trustees contracts with Unlocking Potential, an educational management organization, to procure substantially all educational services. The commissioner asked the Board to vote this month to delegate authority to him to approve the management contract for both schools, anticipating that the contracts are days away from approval and otherwise the schools would have to wait an additional month for Board approval. Ms. Chernow asked to receive the contracts and the commissioner said he would send them to Board members. Ms. Daniels stated that she had abstained from the discussion and would abstain from the vote because she used to be on the board of Unlocking Potential.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:

VOTED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education authorize the Commissioner, in accordance with General Laws c. 15, § 1F, paragraph 3, to act on behalf of the Board in approving the management contract between the board of trustees of UP Academy Charter School of Boston and UP Academy Charter School of Dorchester and Unlocking Potential, a non-profit education management organization located in Boston, as required by General Laws chapter 71, section 89(k)(5), and 603 CMR 1.00. Such approval shall also operate to amend the charter granted to UP Academy Charter School of Boston and UP Academy Charter School of Dorchester.

The vote was 6-0-1. Karen Daniels abstained.

Update on Spirit of Knowledge Charter School Probation

Commissioner Chester said the Board voted in May 2013 to place the Spirit of Knowledge Charter School on probation and he continues to have very serious concerns about the school. He said the Department is monitoring the situation closely as the school's ability to stay solvent is unclear. Associate Commissioner Cliff Chuang said the school projected and budgeted for a higher enrollment than it received, and academic performance was very weak on the latest MCAS test. Mr. Wulfson said governance and financial issues have emerged, and the school has to cut the budget so significantly that program quality would be affected. Ms. Calderón-Rosado asked if any academic progress has been seen. Mr. Chuang said last year a site visit showed significant problems that resulted in the Board placing the school on probation. He said the school's progress and performance index (PPI) is a four out of one hundred for 2013. The commissioner said he will keep the Board informed about the school.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:

**VOTED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education adjourn the meeting
 at 12:20 p.m., subject to the call of the chair.**

The vote was unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,

Mitchell D. Chester
Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education
and Secretary to the Board

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**Minutes of the Special Meeting
of the Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education**

November 18, 2013

5:05 pm – 7:05 pm

**Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
75 Pleasant Street, Malden MA**

Members of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education Present:

Maura Banta, Chair, Melrose

Harneen Chernow, Vice-Chair, Jamaica Plain

Daniel Brogan, Chair, Student Advisory Council, Dennis

Vanessa Calderón-Rosado, Milton

James DiTullio, Secretary of Education's Designee

Ruth Kaplan, Brookline

James Morton, Springfield

Mitchell D. Chester, Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education, Secretary to the Board

Members of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education Absent:

Karen Daniels, Milton

Pendred Noyce, Weston

David Roach, Sutton

Chair Banta called the meeting to order at 5:05 pm.

Chair Banta welcomed James Morton, the newest member of the Board. Mr. Morton resides in Springfield and is the president and chief executive officer of the YMCA of Greater Hartford, working with low income youth and families. Mr. Morton said he is excited to join the Board and to provide insight from his work with young people.

Commissioner Chester said this is the third month the Board is discussing the Partnership for the Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC). The Commissioner said the discussion tonight will inform the Board on the assessment and the two-year transition plan he is proposing. Commissioner Chester introduced two Massachusetts educators who are serving as PARCC fellows, Mary Beth Banios and Mark Healy.

Senior Associate Commissioner Bob Bickerton launched the presentation and said tonight the Board will look at assessment questions, challenges, and benefits of PARCC. Mr. Bickerton provided the Board with a recap of the September and October PARCC discussions. The PARCC transition plan will begin with a field test of the assessment in randomly selected schools across the state in the spring of 2014 and an analysis of the

field test data in fall 2014. In 2014-2015, schools will administer either the PARCC operational test or MCAS; and in fall 2015 the Board will vote on the full adoption of PARCC.

PARCC fellow Mary Beth Banios, assistant superintendent of the Shrewsbury Public Schools, presented an MCAS English language arts (ELA) grade 3 question and compared it to a PARCC ELA grade 3 sample item. Ms. Banios explained that the PARCC item checks students' ability to analyze and think critically, find evidence to support their argument, and draw a conclusion. She noted that the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks guide students to decode text and teach them to analyze. Ms. Banios said the ability to find main ideas and supporting details in text, and the ability to use evidence to support an argument, are threads that run through all grade levels, while text complexity will change through the grade levels.

Mr. Bickerton said after the first operational year of PARCC, teachers will receive assessment results in June, which will assist them in planning curriculum decisions and changes to improve instruction and understanding for students. Ms. Kaplan asked if students would be able to look up the definition of words during the exam. Mr. Bickerton said accessibility features are being developed.

PARCC fellow Mark Healy, math coordinator for the Cambridge Public Schools, presented examples of shifts in mathematics grade 4 standards and assessments. Mr. Healy said previously the standards focused on a lot of items, but they were not in depth and did not have a grade-to-grade progression. He said the new standards focus on a conceptual understanding of what the formulas and processes mean, procedural fluency, and applying the topics to real world situations. Mr. Healy presented an MCAS mathematics grade 4 item and a PARCC grade 4 item. He also described shifts in grade 7 mathematics standards, an MCAS grade 7 constructed response, and a PARCC grade 7 mathematics sample using graphing technology.

Mr. Bickerton commented on technology readiness and said the key issue is 21st-century classroom readiness, not simply PARCC readiness. He said the Department is pursuing federal E-rate modernization, a state infrastructure bond bill, and a device-buying program. Mr. Healy said technology readiness concerns have been heard around the state, as well as excitement about the opportunities technology can bring to the classroom. Ms. Chernow said technology equity is a concern for her. She also noted an equity issue for some students taking the computer-based version of the assessment and others taking the paper-and-pencil version.

Mr. DiTullio asked about the balance of multiple-choice and open response items. Mr. Bickerton said 45 percent of MCAS score points are from constructed response. He said PARCC will give students partial credit for showing their work; not just choosing the answer, but showing the process to get there. Commissioner Chester said technology readiness is a concern, and the advent of PARCC testing provides a unique moment to leverage 21st century technology into schools. He said the pilot period allows the Department to leverage options, such as the state technology bond bill and E-rate

funding. Associate Commissioner Cliff Chang noted PARCC is driving the technology conversation, but it is not the main reason for schools to upgrade their technology. Mr. Chuang said the schools involved in the field test have sufficient technology to administer the assessment, and the readiness gaps will be more clearly identified in 2014-2015. He said PARCC will provide regional workshop trainings, site readiness planning tools and trials, and support.

With respect to the accountability system, Mr. Bickerton said the two-year transition plan allows a period to maintain trends in achievement and student growth. He said the Department will maintain accountability ratings for schools as they move from MCAS to PARCC while ensuring that schools are not disadvantaged by field test participation. Schools have been given the option to calculate their annual progress and performance index with and without the field-tested grades. They also have the option to avoid double testing in the same subject.

Ms. Chernow asked about the effect on educator evaluations. Commissioner Chester said until students are scored on their performance on PARCC tests, other district determined measures would be used for evaluations. He said a Department-wide cross-unit team has convened to analyze these issues and provide tools and support for districts. Ms. Kaplan asked how student scores would be affected. Mr. Bickerton said the field test is an opportunity for our students to test the PARCC items and no student scores will be available. He said students who participate in the field test and not in MCAS will not have a score in that subject. Commissioner Chester said the Department is making the field test as non-intrusive as possible.

Mr. Bickerton said PARCC will have five performance levels, including a college and career readiness standard. Ms. Calderón-Rosado said she is concerned about technology readiness. She asked if the field test selection was random, and if parents can opt out. Mr. Bickerton said schools were chosen randomly, with the option to withdraw if they do not have the level of technology specified by PARCC. He said parents were not given an option to decline the field test, which is part of the assessment system the Board has authority and responsibility to establish. Mr. Brogan asked about schools chosen for the paper-and-pencil field test and noted that some students may perform better in one mode or the other depending on their learning style. Mr. Bickerton said PARCC is doing studies on comparability.

Mr. Morton asked if the Department has seen a pattern with schools that have declined to participate in the field test. Mr. Bickerton said Level 4 and 5 schools could opt out of the field test, although some Lawrence schools, for example, are participating. Also, if a school without the proper technology was selected, in some cases another school in the district with the technology was substituted. Mr. DiTullio said he hopes there will be adequate representation of low-income students. Ms. Chernow asked how many schools are choosing to use MCAS and PARCC. Commissioner Chester said schools are being surveyed now.

Mr. Bickerton and Maureen LaCroix of the Department discussed communications and outreach. They said they have been presenting to professional associations, school committees, and superintendents. The Department hosted webinars with superintendents and principals participating in the field test. The Department is also producing a district toolkit and information for parents.

Ms. Kaplan asked about accommodations for special education students. Mr. Bickerton said the accommodations are built into the PARCC test and are based on Massachusetts accommodations for MCAS. He said if a certain accommodation needed by students with disabilities is not ready in time for the field test, those students will not be expected to participate. Mr. DiTullio asked if other states randomly chose schools for the field test and which grades are being tested. Commissioner Chester said all states randomly selected participating schools and grades 3-8, 9, and 11 will be tested. Commissioner Chester said the grade 10 competency determination will not change until 2018 or later. He said he expects that in 2014 the Board will start discussing how to approach the graduation requirement in the years ahead.

Commissioner Chester said the transition plan gives the Board two years to track and analyze the development of the assessment. He said MCAS has served us well but after a decade and a half, it is clear we need to upgrade. The commissioner said the PARCC assessment will give students, parents, and educators better signals of students' readiness for the next grade level and ultimately for college and careers. Commissioner Chester noted the unprecedented partnership with higher education and the commitment to use PARCC for public higher education placement decisions.

Chair Banta thanked the PARCC fellows and Department staff for the informative presentation.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:

VOTED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education adjourn the meeting at 7:05 p.m., subject to the call of the chair.

The vote was unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,

Mitchell D. Chester
Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education
and Secretary to the Board

Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education

November 19, 2013
8:34 a.m. – 12:20 p.m.

**Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
75 Pleasant Street
Malden, MA**

Members of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education Present:

Maura Banta, Chair, Melrose
Harneen Chernow, Vice-Chair, Jamaica Plain
Daniel Brogan, Chair, Student Advisory Council, Dennis
Vanessa Calderón-Rosado, Milton
Karen Daniels, Milton
Ruth Kaplan, Brookline
Matthew Malone, Secretary of Education
Pendred Noyce, Weston
David Roach, Sutton

Mitchell D. Chester, Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education, Secretary to the Board

Member of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education Absent:

James Morton, Springfield

Chair Banta called the meeting to order at 8:34 am.

Comments from the Chair

Chair Banta welcomed members of the Board and asked them to introduce themselves. Chair Banta introduced a special guest, Kelley Brown, a history teacher from Easthampton High School. Ms. Brown presented an abbreviated lesson to the Board on the Gettysburg Address to demonstrate how the new Massachusetts frameworks, incorporating the Common Core State Standards, are being implemented in classrooms.

Chair Banta asked Board members and others in attendance to observe a moment of silence in memory of Anne Serino, the Department's adult basic education director, who passed away recently. Chair Banta said the Board's Proficiency Gap Committee, which Vice-Chair Chernow chairs, would meet this fall to discuss Level 4 and 5 schools. Chair Banta said she recently attended a meeting of the National Association of State Boards of

Education, of which Massachusetts is a member. Chair Banta encouraged other Board members to take advantage of the association's resources and opportunities to participate in study groups and committees.

Comments from the Commissioner

Commissioner Chester thanked Easthampton High School teacher Kelley Brown for her impressive presentation. The Commissioner noted that this week marks the 150th anniversary of the Gettysburg Address and the 50th anniversary of the assassination of President Kennedy. Commissioner Chester said the Department recently held a well attended conference for charter schools focused on equity, access, and excellence. The Commissioner said the RETELL (Rethinking Equity and Teaching for English Language Learners) initiative is moving forward, 10,000 educators have signed up for training this year, and the recent supplemental state budget provides additional funding that that the Board had sought for this purpose. Commissioner Chester said he was pleased to attend a surprise ceremony for this year's Milken Award winner from Massachusetts: James Moonan, a Milton middle school mathematics teacher. The commissioner was joined at the ceremony by Board members Vanessa Calderón-Rosado and Karen Daniels.

Commissioner Chester said the state's educator evaluation model has gained attention nationally for the progress in improving feedback and goals for educators. Commissioner Chester said the state will release 2012-13 data on educator evaluation ratings later in the week. The Commissioner said he recently attended the Department's annual Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment Summit, which was a successful and encouraging convening of over 900 educators from 184 districts across the Commonwealth. Survey responses from the attendees were very encouraging about the level and quality of work going on in districts to integrate the new curriculum standards and educator evaluation goals.

Comments from the Secretary

Secretary Malone said Kelley Brown's presentation was a wonderful lesson on how to use the new standards to build literacy through content. The Secretary said there has been a lot of attention placed on the state's 4th grade reading results, and rightly so because early literacy is vital. He thanked K-12 educators for the work they are doing and noted the role of Early Education and Care in getting young children ready to succeed in school. Secretary Malone said he continues to visit schools throughout the Commonwealth and he recently visited Smith Vocational and Agricultural High School, where students are making hands-on connections between disciplines. The Secretary said he is encouraged by the partnerships between K-12 and higher education to provide multiple pathways to higher education. Secretary Malone said the Administration is busy developing House 2, the Governor's budget recommendation.

Public Comment

1. Gerry Mroz, a Melrose parent, addressed the Board on regionalization and the Smarter Balanced assessment.

2. Tracy O'Connell Novick, a member of the Worcester School Committee, addressed the Board on PARCC.
3. Jason Williams, Massachusetts state director of Stand for Children, and Steve Koczela, President of MassINC Polling Group, addressed the Board on results of a Stand for Children/MassINC survey.

Approval of the Minutes

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:

VOTED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education approve the minutes of the October 22, 2013 Regular Meeting.

The vote was 8-0-1. Ms. Kaplan abstained.

Lawrence Public Schools: Progress Report on Full First Year of Receivership

Commissioner Chester said he is pleased with the tremendous gains the district is making. The commissioner said on this second anniversary of the Board's vote on receivership, the district is on the right track.

Lawrence Public Schools Receiver Jeff Riley presented a slide presentation to the Board. He said the work in Lawrence is guided by six themes: (1) to build on excellence in Lawrence and add capacity through talented people and partners from across Massachusetts; (2) to focus on schools as the unit of change and aim to build a district of highly autonomous, high performing neighborhood schools; (3) to empower the individuals closest to the students, who know how best to meet their unique needs; (4) to examine investments to ensure they support initiatives that will produce the best results for LPS students; (5) to move with speed, and maintain momentum to drive continued progress over time; and (6) to focus on results rather than processes and adjust the plan based on results. Receiver Riley said the district has focused on the opportunity and achievement gap and has seen promising first year results, particularly in mathematics.

Receiver Riley discussed the reorganization of the school department's central office to shift resources directly to the schools. Receiver Riley said the district showed the highest growth on MCAS among all of the Gateway cities. The district has also implemented an extended day using targeted interventions and enrichment opportunities.

Commissioner Chester said Mr. Riley is leading a remarkable transformation; schools have developed their own individual plans based on their needs, and teachers and schools have been empowered by the redesigned contract. Mr. Riley said teachers are rewarded for their hard work, and have the opportunity to participate in a teacher leader cabinet. Receiver Riley discussed additional initiatives that include vacation academies, a family resource center, and work to update technology.

Dr. Calderón-Rosado congratulated Receiver Riley on the district's progress. She asked about results for English language learners (ELLs) and special education students. Receiver Riley said there has been progress and mathematics scores for both groups have improved, while English language arts has seen more incremental improvements.

Ms. Daniels said the district is doing creative work and asked about the high school. Receiver Riley said the high school has made progress but has a long way to go. He said the school is creating a more structured program model for grades 9-10 and is encouraging students in grades 11-12 to become advocates for their own learning. In response to a question from Ms. Kaplan, Mr. Riley said Lawrence is participating in the PARCC field test in the non-MCAS grades. Mr. Roach asked if the principals have the capacity to implement educator evaluations. Receiver Riley said Lawrence is ahead of the curve, and other duties have been taken off principals so they can focus on important goals. Secretary Malone commended the strategies of empowering principals, streamlining their tasks, moving resources to schools, and providing time for teacher collaboration.

Commissioner Chester said the staff and leadership team in Lawrence are doing great work. The Commissioner said the district has historically been funded below foundation budget, and this is the first year the city is funding the schools at foundation level. Commissioner Chester said while much work remains, the receivership shows remarkable progress.

Plan and Timetable for Administering MCAS and PARCC Student Assessments

Chair Banta provided a recap of last evening's special meeting where the Board heard from the Massachusetts educators who are serving as PARCC fellows to promote and engage other educators across the state on the new college and career ready standards and the development work associated with PARCC assessments. Board members also reviewed sample PARCC test items at the special meeting. She thanked the Commissioner and Department for facilitating such a rich discussion.

Commissioner Chester said MCAS is now in its 17th administration year (the graduation requirement is 14 years old), and while MCAS has served Massachusetts well, it is due for an upgrade. He described the PARCC development process, in which Massachusetts educators, as well as Higher Education Commissioner Freeland and the higher education sector, have played major roles. Commissioner Chester said he is proposing a two-year period to get to know PARCC, starting with the field test this spring. He said that under PARCC, students will receive more accurate signals about whether they are on track for the next grade level and, in high school, for college and careers. Commissioner Chester said he is aware of concerns from the field about the pace of reform, and that's exactly why he is proposing a two-year transition period to allow school districts to "test drive" PARCC before the Board votes on full implementation. He said he is forming a working group with the MASS and other associations to help integrate the curriculum, assessment, and evaluation initiatives.

Senior Associate Commissioner Bob Bickerton said approximately fifteen percent of students in grades 3-8, 9, and 11 will participate in this spring's PARCC field test. Mr. Bickerton said students will either take the performance based assessment or the end of year assessment in either English language arts or mathematics.

Dr. Noyce said she found the PARCC assessment questions to be more challenging than MCAS questions and was impressed by them. Dr. Noyce said we have seen surveys and heard from educators that the standards will improve instruction and advance the mission to prepare all students well for life beyond high school. She said she is glad we are not complacent about our current program and commended the Commissioner for his deliberate approach. Mr. Brogan said he is in favor of PARCC, but also concerned about the technological inequities across school districts. Mr. Brogan said he is convinced that within two years, students and teachers will be comfortable with the new test.

Dr. Calderón-Rosado said she agrees with Mr. Brogan's comment on gaps in technology. She said she is looking forward to the field test, and this opportunity should be used to advocate for technology funding. Dr. Calderón-Rosado said Level 4 schools, which have the neediest children, have the choice to be exempt from the field test. She encouraged the Department to have a representative sample for the field test.

Mr. Roach said when we made the decision to go with new frameworks, it was inevitable that the state would need to update its assessment system and align it to the new standards. Mr. Roach said the Board needs to think about what is in the best interest of our students, and the potential of PARCC is something that cannot be ignored. He said work is being done to close opportunity and achievement gaps, and we must close the technology gap over the next two years.

Secretary Malone said he sees the issues with technology inequity and the Governor is committed to improving the infrastructure. Secretary Malone said he is in favor of field testing the assessment, and he is pleased that the Department is engaging the field on this matter.

Ms. Chernow said she has great concerns about technology inequities in schools and classrooms. Ms. Chernow said she does not see how the paper-and-pencil test would have the same features as the online version, which could lead to additional inequity for those without access to the computer-based version of the assessment. Ms. Chernow asked how data would get back to teachers in a timely way. Mr. Bickerton said Massachusetts has been building a data system, Edwin analytics, for educators to access their student data directly.

Ms. Kaplan said this is a weighty decision and despite this only being a field test, it seems we are moving in the direction of PARCC. Ms. Kaplan said she did not see much difference between MCAS and PARCC items. She said districts need more time to implement the curriculum frameworks and she shares the concern about inequities in technology. Ms. Daniels said she has struggled with this decision and she supports raising the level of rigor to ensure our students are successful, which is what Massachusetts has always done.

Commissioner Chester said the proposed two-year transition plan will ensure that we have adequate time to judge if PARCC is a value-added choice. He said schools need to upgrade their technology not because of PARCC but because all students deserve to have 21st-century classrooms. The Commissioner said the advent of PARCC has gotten the bonding committee to move additional funding for technology in schools. Commissioner Chester said the driving factor should be the goal of providing students with the knowledge and skills they need to succeed in college and the workplace.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:

VOTED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, in accordance with Mass. General Laws chapter 69, sections 1B and 1I, hereby adopts the two-year MCAS-to-PARCC transition plan, as presented by the Commissioner, and directs the Commissioner to implement the plan.

Consistent with the Commissioner's recommendation, the Board anticipates that the two-year pilot will:

- **provide for a robust comparison of the MCAS and PARCC student assessment programs, so the Board can decide in the fall of 2015 whether to sunset the MCAS English language arts and math assessments for grades 3-8 and employ PARCC as the state testing program for these subjects beginning in the 2015/2016 school year;**
- **give teachers and schools additional time to continue implementing the Massachusetts curriculum frameworks in English language arts and math adopted by the Board in December 2010 and to become familiar with new online test administration procedures before full-scale implementation of PARCC;**
- **permit a smooth transition in using assessment results for accountability while maintaining trend lines that link back to pre-PARCC performance;**
- **reserve for a future date the Board's consideration of options for English language arts and math assessments at the high school level (grades 9-12); and**

- maintain continuity in the use of MCAS tests for students to earn the Competency Determination for high school graduation, at least through the graduating class of 2018 (this year's eighth graders).

Based on the results of the two-year pilot, the Commissioner will recommend and the Board will decide, in the fall of 2015, whether to sunset the MCAS English language arts and math assessments for grades 3-8 and employ PARCC as the state testing program for these subjects beginning in the 2015/2016 school year.

The vote was 6-3. Ms. Kaplan, Ms. Chernow, and Mr. Brogan voted in opposition.

Dr. Calderón-Rosado left the meeting at 11 a.m.

Proposed Amendments to Regulations on Educator Licensure and Preparation Program Approval, 603 CMR 7 (Professional Standards for Teachers)

Commissioner Chester introduced Heather Peske, Associate Commissioner for Educator Quality, Liz Losee, Assistant Director of the Office of Educator Preparation, Policy, and Leadership, and Debra Comfort, Associate General Counsel. Ms. Peske said the purpose of these regulations is to better align our system of professional standards for preparation and licensure to the standards for educator evaluation. Secretary Malone said this vote is timely because it helps to align the K-12 and higher education sectors through preparation standards that shape our future educators.

Dr. Noyce asked if the amendments would impede non-traditional candidates and career-changers from entering the teaching profession. Ms. Losee said there are 79 organizations in Massachusetts preparing teachers, including 50 institutions of higher education. She said the organizations will have time to shift by 2016, without having to increase the number of courses. Ms. Peske said the state's work with the Council of Chief State School Officers and its Network for Transforming Educator Preparation enables us to learn from other states and programs.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:

VOTED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, in accordance with M.G.L. c. 69, § 1B, and c. 71, § 38G, hereby authorize the Commissioner to proceed in accordance with the Administrative Procedure Act, G.L. c.30A, § 3, to solicit public comment on the proposed amendments to the Regulations on Educator Licensure and Preparation Program Approval, 603 CMR 7.00, as presented by the Commissioner. The proposed amendments would update the Professional Standards for Teachers, to align them

with the standards in other initiatives such as the Educator Evaluation Framework.

The vote was unanimous.

Update on Level 5 Schools

Commissioner Chester introduced Lynda Foisy, Senior Associate Commissioner, and Liza Veto, special assistant to the Senior Associate Commissioner. Ms. Foisy provided an overview of the four schools that were designated Level 5 this fall and the implications of such a designation. Ms. Foisy and Ms. Veto reviewed the outreach to the school communities through roundtable discussions and engagement of a local stakeholder group for each of the designated schools in Boston, Holyoke, and New Bedford.

Ms. Chernow asked about Boston and Holyoke and both districts' interest in pursuing in-district options. Commissioner Chester said it is his responsibility to ensure a sound turnaround plan for each school and he has to appoint someone to implement it. The commissioner said he is considering the superintendents and other potential partners as leaders of the turnaround work, which could include a hybrid model, a district model, or an outside partner. Dr. Noyce asked what is happening in these four Level 5 schools while decisions are being made. Ms. Foisy said the expectation is that the schools will continue to implement their existing Level 4 plans.

Ms. Kaplan asked about the principals at these schools. Commissioner Chester said the Level 5 designation does not necessarily mean a change in the school's leadership; if the superintendent were asked to implement the plan, the superintendent would choose who would lead the school. Secretary Malone said he is impressed with the thoughtfulness of this approach and with the hybrid model and the notion of empowerment and site-level redesign as catalysts for change. He commended the Department and its Accountability and Targeted Assistance team for their work. Chair Banta noted that increased school autonomy is what we are seeing in Lawrence. Commissioner Chester said the Department will draw on the Lawrence team as resources. He said he enters this first foray into school receivership with great humility and the conviction that we do not have to accept poor results for low-income students.

Secretary Malone left the meeting at 11:45 a.m. The Secretary's designee, Jim DiTullio, participated in his place for the rest of the meeting.

Dr. Noyce asked how long the school receivership will last. Commissioner Chester said it would be a minimum of three years, though it could be longer.

Board of Elementary and Secondary Education Budget Proposal for FY 2015

Chair Banta said the Board's budget committee has met twice to develop a set of budget recommendations for the full Board. The Board's budget priorities include: small increases in key initiatives, administrative funding to support the Department in

managing programs, using e-Rate dollars and the potential of an Information Technology Bond to finance technology improvements in school districts, and using increases in Chapter 70 aid as incentives for reform initiatives. Commissioner Chester said we are seeking to leverage the funds we have and find ways to encourage collaboration and support districts.

The Department's Chief Financial Officer, Bill Bell, outlined the Fiscal Year 2015 budget cycle. He noted that the FY14 supplemental budget provided the additional funding the Board and Department had requested for RETELL. He listed the areas of emphasis for FY2015 funding. Deputy Commissioner Jeff Wulfson discussed Chapter 70 and the possibility of using the expected increase to address some key issues. Chair Banta said this approach would help to address concern about unfunded mandates. Ms. Chernow expressed appreciation for the recommendation on the connecting-activities line item.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:

VOTED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, in accordance with Mass. Gen. Laws chapter 69, § 1A, approve the budget priorities for the FY 2015 education budget as recommended by the Board's budget committee and the Commissioner, and direct the Commissioner to convey these recommendations and priorities to the Secretary of Education, the Governor, and the Legislature.

The vote was 7-0-1. Mr. DiTullio abstained.

Spirit of Knowledge Charter School: Surrender of Charter

Commissioner Chester said that since the Board's October meeting, the Spirit of Knowledge Charter School has closed. Commissioner Chester said the vote today is to accept the surrender of the charter, to ensure there is no ambiguity as to its status. Deputy Commissioner Jeff Wulfson said school closings are never easy, and the Department appreciates the school's board of trustees making the right decision rather than dragging out the process. Mr. Wulfson said Worcester Public Schools Superintendent Melinda Boone has committed to taking in any resident students who wish to enroll and to make that transition process a smooth one.

Associate Commissioner Cliff Chuang said Superintendent Boone told him that so far, Worcester Public Schools has enrolled about 140 out of 170 students from the charter school. Ms. Kaplan asked about lessons learned from this charter school's experience. Mr. Chuang said under-enrollment from the outset is a big risk factor, and the Department is now routinely gathering more data on demand for new charter applicants. Mr. Roach

commended the Worcester Public Schools leadership for welcoming the students back into the district.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:

VOTED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, in accordance with General Laws chapter 71, section 89; General Laws chapter 30A, section 13; and 603 CMR 1.00, hereby accepts the surrender, in lieu of revocation, of the public school charter granted to the Spirit of Knowledge Charter School, effective October 31, 2013.

The Board of Trustees of Spirit of Knowledge Charter School shall comply with all procedures and timelines established by the Commissioner to effectuate surrender of the school's charter, transfer of students into other schools, and an orderly closure of the Spirit of Knowledge Charter School.

The vote was unanimous.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:

VOTED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education adjourn the meeting at 12:20 p.m., subject to the call of the chair.

The vote was unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,

Mitchell D. Chester
Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education
and Secretary to the Board

2014 minutes

**Minutes of the Regular Meeting
of the Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education**

Tuesday, February 25, 2014

8:35 a.m. – 11:45 a.m.

**Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
75 Pleasant Street, Malden, MA**

Members of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education Present:

Maura Banta, Chair, Melrose

Daniel Brogan, Chair, Student Advisory Council, Dennis

Vanessa Calderón-Rosado, Milton

Karen Daniels, Milton

Ruth Kaplan, Brookline

Matthew Malone, Secretary of Education (by James DiTullio, designee)

James O'S. Morton, Springfield

Pendred Noyce, Weston

David Roach, Sutton

Mitchell D. Chester, Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education, Secretary to the Board

Member of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education Absent:

Harneen Chernow, Vice-Chair, Jamaica Plain

Chair Banta called the meeting to order at 8:35 a.m.

Comments from the Chair

Chair Banta and Commissioner Chester presented a citation to the Department's Chief Operating Officer, Carole Thomson, wished her the best in her retirement, and thanked her for her years of service to the students of the Commonwealth. Chair Banta gave a recap of the February 24th special meeting on civic education and engagement. She said the discussion was excellent and the goal is to make civic education an integral part of schooling, not an add-on to the list of things districts have to do.

Comments from the Commissioner

Commissioner Chester reported that the Department's two deputy commissioners and chief financial officer were attending the Ways and Means Committee hearing in Amherst on the FY2015 education budget. He updated the Board on work underway on computer science education. Commissioner Chester said he has been in correspondence with the Pioneer Institute on the Common Core State Standards and the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC). He informed the Board that the Department has received a waiver from the United States Department of Education so that schools participating in the PARCC field test can avoid double-testing students.

Comments from the Secretary

Mr. DiTullio said the special meeting on civic education was an excellent discussion. He noted that Secretary Malone was at the Ways and Means budget hearing. Mr. DiTullio said the Governor's budget is strong on education, with historic investments in Chapter 70 aid, early learning, and higher education. He said the school safety and security taskforce is meeting for the first time this afternoon.

Public Comment

1. Tim Sullivan of the Massachusetts Teachers Association addressed the Board on the school turnaround work in New Bedford.

2. Anne Borg and Terry Yoffe of the League of Women Voters addressed the Board on civic learning and engagement.

Vanessa Calderón-Rosado arrived at 9:05 a.m.

Approval of Minutes

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:

VOTED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education approve the minutes of the January 27, 2014 special meeting and the January 28, 2014 regular meeting.

The vote was unanimous.

Proposed Amendments to Regulations on Educator Licensure and Preparation Program Approval (603 CMR 7) and Educator License Renewal (603 CMR 44): Requirements for Teachers of Deaf/Hard of Hearing Students

Commissioner Chester gave the Board an overview of the main goals of the proposed amendments. He reminded the Board that today's vote is to send the proposed regulations out for public comment.

Associate Commissioner Heather Peske said the Department has been working with the field on these regulations. In response to Ms. Kaplan's questions, Special Education Director Marcia Mittnacht said a provision in the regulations is aimed at strengthening the skill level of American Sign Language educators. Ms. Noyce asked if deaf students reach proficiency in reading. Ms. Mittnacht said some students do, but it varies depending on students' hearing loss, and outcomes are changing with the increased use of cochlear implants.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:

VOTED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, in accordance with M.G.L. c. 69, § 1B, and c. 71, § 38G, hereby authorize the Commissioner to proceed in accordance with the Administrative Procedure Act, G.L. c.30A, § 3, to solicit public comment on the proposed amendments to the Regulations on Educator Licensure and Preparation Program Approval (603 CMR 7) and Educator License Renewal (603 CMR 44), as presented by the

Commissioner. The proposed amendments relate to the requirements for Teachers of Deaf/Hard of Hearing Students.

Update on Level 5 Schools

Commissioner Chester said four schools were designated as Level 5 and he has selected turnaround operators to implement each of the turnaround plans. He described the process and timelines set forth in the statute and said he has directed the school committees and affected unions in Boston, Holyoke, and New Bedford to undertake bargaining on a series of working conditions. The commissioner said he expects to release the draft turnaround plans early in March, and then the local stakeholder group, superintendent, and school committee will have the opportunity to propose modifications.

Chair Banta thanked the commissioner for keeping the Board well informed about the process. In response to a question from Ms. Daniels, Commissioner Chester confirmed that Unlocking Potential is the turnaround operator for the Holland Elementary School, but is not turning it into a charter school. He said in each case the receivers are responsible for implementing the Commissioner's turnaround plan. Mr. Roach asked about the staffing review under the Lawrence receivership and in New Bedford. Commissioner Chester said in Lawrence, the receiver re-evaluated staff rather than exercising his right to require all to re-apply, and about one-fourth of the staff did not return. Commissioner Chester said in New Bedford the superintendent did announce that staff would need to re-apply. He said New Bedford High School is a Level 4 school and the district is responsible for implementing the turnaround plan.

In response to Ms. Kaplan's questions, Commissioner Chester said the law provides for an initial three-year turnaround plan. Commissioner Chester said he would look for a sustained improvement trajectory before an exit strategy is even discussed. He said the school districts and receivers in the Level 5 schools have met with faculty and sent letters to parents to inform and engage them in the process. Ms. Calderón-Rosado asked about the Dever's dual language program. Commissioner Chester said the program received a lot of advocacy, but after a thorough review of the program it is clearly very uneven. Commissioner Chester said a strong program for English Language Learners is being discussed for all of the turnaround schools.

Update on PARCC

Commissioner Chester informed the Board of the recent press release on the schools participating in the field test. He said in most cases just a few classrooms in the school have been chosen, and 81,000 Massachusetts students will try out the assessment. Commissioner Chester said there is a great deal of interest in the field test, and Burlington and Revere are going to use a variety of devices to analyze what works best. He reminded the Board of the two-year transition plan the Board adopted in November, which includes the PARCC field test this spring, next year's choice of MCAS or PARCC, and a Board vote in the fall of 2015 on whether to adopt PARCC as the Commonwealth's assessment program.

Chair Banta said the implementation timeline is thoughtful, and most in the field agree. Commissioner Chester said some states have made the transition abruptly, while Massachusetts tried to be deliberate in implementation and allow districts to try out the assessment and provide feedback during the "test drive" period. He said MCAS is in its seventeenth year of administration and a lot has been learned in that time about technology, student learning, and what students need to know to succeed in the twenty-first century.

Ms. Noyce asked what the state will learn from the field test and what will be reported. Commissioner Chester said students will not receive scores on the field test because we are assessing the assessment and analyzing the testing items. He said information will be reported to the public and the Board. Ms. Daniels said she is pleased that so many schools are participating in the online mode. She asked how schools are getting students ready, including those that are not technologically advanced. Luis Rodriguez of the Office of Digital Learning said PARCC practice items are available, and digital literacy tools vary from district to district. In response to Ms. Kaplan's questions, Mr. Rodriguez said tested students are in grades three through eight and some in high school. He noted that PARCC set the sample for the number of online and number of paper tests, as part of the random sampling. Mr. Roach asked for an update on the state IT bond in the Legislature. Commissioner Chester said federal E-Rate funds are more certain; the state IT bond bill has passed the House and he is hopeful it will pass the Senate, but he cannot predict when that might happen.

Virtual Schools – Recommendation for New Commonwealth of Massachusetts Virtual School

Commissioner Chester reminded the Board that its formal approval of virtual schools is the culmination of recommendations the Board made to the Legislature to ensure state oversight, quality control, and consumer protection. He said he is presenting one applicant for approval with conditions. Luis Rodriguez explained the conditions being placed upon the school, including the duration of the certificate, maximum enrollment, and governance. Mr. Brogan asked about the student to teacher ratio, listed as 43 to 1 in the application. Mr. Rodriguez said the ratio will be much lower with the reduced maximum enrollment and tuition rate. Mr. Roach asked about ensuring safe environments and reporting of suspected child abuse or neglect. Mr. Rodriguez said these safeguards are covered in the regulations and opening procedures. Associate Commissioner Cliff Chuang noted that the Department will require substantial work from new virtual schools through the opening procedures, as it does for new charter schools. He said the virtual school would have to meet the requirements by the time of the school opening. Mr. Roach asked what about the experience with the first virtual school suggests we are ready for a second one in Massachusetts. Commissioner Chester said the new statute and proposed regulations, and the experience of the past several years, put us in a much better place, with a clear structure and standards. Mr. Chuang said there is evidence of demand, and the school went through a rigorous review process.

VOTED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, in accordance with General Laws chapter 71, section 94, and chapter 379, section 6, of the Acts of 2012, subject to the conditions set forth below and regulations promulgated pursuant to General Laws chapter 71, section 94, hereby grants a certificate to the board of trustees of the following school, as recommended by the Commissioner:

Commonwealth of Massachusetts Virtual School (CMVS):

TEC Connections Academy Commonwealth Virtual School

Location:	Dedham
Maximum Enrollment:	2,000, with a maximum of 1,000 students in year 1 and 1,500 students in year 2
Grade Levels:	K-12
Certificate Timeframe:	July 1, 2014 through June 30, 2017
Per Pupil Tuition Rate:	\$6,700 (minus \$75 admin fee)

Pursuant to General Laws chapter 71, section 94, the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education hereby imposes the following conditions on the certificate of the TEC Connections Academy Commonwealth Virtual School (TECCA):

1. No later than March 14, 2014, the board of trustees of TECCA must submit for the Commissioner's approval a list of additional proposed board members of TECCA who possess the needed skills and expertise to oversee the CMVS, with a minimum of 5 total board members, and identifying the board chair.
2. All appointed and proposed trustees who also hold a position, whether paid or unpaid, with The Education Cooperative or its member school districts must seek a written opinion from the State Ethics Commission and, upon receipt, provide a copy of that opinion to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. For appointed trustees, that opinion must be requested no later than the close of business on March 14, 2014.
3. No later than March 14, 2014, the board of trustees of TECCA must submit bylaws for review and approval to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.
4. No later than April 1, 2014, the board of trustees of TECCA must submit to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education a draft contract with Connections Academy for review and approval.
5. No later than April 1, 2014, the board of trustees of TECCA must submit a draft enrollment policy, procedure, and application to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education for review and approval, and such approval must be received prior to admission of any students.
6. TECCA shall establish, prior to opening, and shall operate a program of special education in a manner consistent with all applicable federal and state laws and regulations.
7. TECCA shall establish, prior to opening, and shall operate a program for English language learners, including recruiting such students and enrolling applicants, in a manner consistent with all applicable federal and state laws and regulations.
8. TECCA shall submit, no later than August 1, 2014, annual goals that are specific and measurable for student achievement and college and career readiness including, but not limited to the Department's Progress and Performance Index (PPI).
9. TECCA shall complete the alignment of the virtual school's curriculum to the Massachusetts curriculum frameworks (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/current.html>) no later than September 1, 2015.

In addition to these conditions, the TEC Connections Academy Commonwealth Virtual School, like all Commonwealth of Massachusetts virtual schools, must also comply with the terms of its certificate and request and receive approval from the Commissioner in advance of implementing any change to the terms. The Commissioner shall review and report to the Board on success or lack of success of the TEC Connections Academy Commonwealth Virtual School in meeting the conditions imposed on its

certificate and, based upon his review, shall recommend such further action as he deems appropriate.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts virtual school shall be operated in accordance with the provisions of General Laws chapter 71, section 94; regulations governing Commonwealth of Massachusetts virtual schools; and all other applicable state and federal laws and regulations and such conditions as the Commissioner or the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education may establish, all of which shall be deemed conditions of the certificate.

The vote was unanimous.

Ms. Kaplan had to leave the meeting at 10:50 a.m.

Charter Schools – Recommendations for New Charter Schools

Ms. Calderón-Rosado gave the Board an update on the February 24th charter school committee meeting. She said there was a discussion of comments on the proposed regulations, initiatives to increase access and equity, common school performance criteria, and the launch of a new parent complaint system.

Mr. Brogan reported on the Fall River public hearing. He said there was strong support for the proposed Argosy Collegiate Charter School and New Heights Charter School, while two opponents were concerned about funding. Mr. Roach reported that at the Springfield public hearing, 25 people spoke in favor of the proposed charter school.

Commissioner Chester said Massachusetts sets a high bar for charter schools, both at the application and operational stages. He said that six applicant groups were invited to apply and submitted final applications. Commissioner Chester said after considerable review he is recommending Argosy Collegiate Charter School and Springfield Preparatory Charter School. He noted that the other applicants have potential, and receive feedback from the Department to improve. He added that the two schools he is recommending had applied previously and learned from the feedback they received.

Argosy Collegiate Charter School

Associate Commissioner Cliff Chuang said Argosy submitted an application last year and has made significant progress in building its capacity, enhancing access and equity, and addressing previous application weaknesses. He reminded Board members that Argosy had to meet the proven provider requirements because Fall River is above the nine percent net school spending cap. Mr. DiTullio asked if another Fall River application could come forward next year. Mr. Chuang said given the Atlantis Charter School's expansion and the Argosy application, Fall River would be at the eighteen percent net school spending cap, as are Boston and Holyoke. In response to Mr. DiTullio's question, Mr. Chuang said the application review process is criterion-referenced, not norm-referenced. He said public comment is taken into consideration, but the ultimate decision is based on the criteria, which the New Heights application did not fully meet.

VOTED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, in accordance with General Laws chapter 71, section 89, and 603 CMR 1.00, and subject to the

conditions set forth below, hereby grants a charter to the following school, as recommended by the Commissioner:

Commonwealth Charter:

Argosy Collegiate Charter School

Location:	Fall River
Maximum Enrollment:	644
Grade Levels:	6-12
Opening Year:	FY2015

The charter school shall be operated in accordance with the provisions of General Laws chapter 71, section 89; 603 CMR 1.00; and all other applicable state and federal laws and regulations and such conditions as the Commissioner or the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education may establish, all of which shall be deemed conditions of the charter; provided that, in accordance with section 9 of chapter 12 of the Acts of 2010, the Commissioner may limit the school's actual enrollment to an amount less than the maximum enrollment approved herein.

The vote was unanimous.

Springfield Preparatory Charter School

Mr. Morton stated that he would abstain from the discussion and vote on this matter because he has business and personal relationships with some people affiliated with the school.

Mr. Chuang gave an overview of Springfield Preparatory Charter School's application. He said Springfield Prep previously applied for a charter and made significant improvements to the application and plan, including a commitment to backfilling every vacant seat in grades K-8. Mr. Roach said the school deserves credit for strengthening its application and community support. Mr. DiTullio asked about teacher salaries at the proposed school. Mr. Chuang said the Department posts the information online.

VOTED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, in accordance with General Laws chapter 71, section 89, and 603 CMR 1.00, and subject to the conditions set forth below, hereby grants a charter to the following school, as recommended by the Commissioner:

Commonwealth Charter:

Springfield Preparatory Charter School

Location:	Springfield
Maximum Enrollment:	486
Grade Levels:	K-8
Opening Year:	FY2016

The charter school shall be operated in accordance with the provisions of General Laws chapter 71, section 89; 603 CMR 1.00; and all other applicable state and federal laws and regulations and such conditions as the Commissioner or the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education may establish, all of which shall be deemed conditions of the charter; provided that, in accordance with section 9 of chapter 12 of the Acts of 2010, the Commissioner may limit the school's actual enrollment to an amount less than the maximum enrollment approved herein.

The vote was 7-0-1. Mr. Morton abstained.

Major Amendment for Atlantis Charter School

Commissioner Chester said he is recommending the amendment request in light of the school's continued solid academic performance and its responsiveness to concerns in the past. He said the school has earned the expansion. Mr. Chuang said the school is high-performing and is committed to addressing access and equity and backfilling vacant seats through the tenth grade.

VOTED: **that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, in accordance with General Laws chapter 71, section 89, and 603 CMR 1.00, hereby removes the conditions imposed on the charter of the Atlantis Charter School.**

Further, that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, in accordance with General Laws chapter 71, section 89, and 603 CMR 1.00, hereby amends the charter granted to the following school, as presented by the Commissioner:

Atlantis Charter School (enrollment increase from 795 to 1378)

Location:	Fall River
Maximum Enrollment:	1378
Grades Served:	K-12
Effective year:	FY2015

Atlantis Charter School shall be operated in accordance with the provisions of General Laws chapter 71, section 89, and 603 CMR 1.00 and all other applicable state and federal laws and regulations and such additional conditions as the Commissioner may from time to time establish, all of which shall be deemed conditions of the charter.

The vote was unanimous.

Amendment Request for Consolidation and Conditions on Charters of Match Charter Public School and Match Community Day Charter Public School

Ms. Calderón-Rosado stated that she would abstain from the discussion and vote on this matter because she has a business relationship with the school.

Commissioner Chester said Match has delivered a high quality education to its students and has expanded the school's work and best practices in innovative ways, including initiatives on educator preparation and intensive tutoring in partnership with school turnaround in Lawrence and elsewhere. He recommended that the Board vote to consolidate the two charters and place three conditions on the school to ensure the governance structures and relationships are consistent with the conflict of interest law. Mr. Chuang said Match's innovations and dissemination of educational ideas, operations, and practices are exactly what was envisioned for charter schools from the beginning. He said the consolidation will great a K-12 pipeline for students. In response to Ms. Noyce's enrollment question, Mr. Chuang said Match is committed to backfilling vacant seats at grade nine, and the consolidation will increase access.

VOTED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, in accordance with General Laws chapter 71, section 89, and 603 CMR 1.00, hereby amends the charters of the Match Community Day Charter Public School and Match Charter Public School, as presented by the Commissioner, effective July 1, 2014:

Match Charter Public School
(total enrollment of 1250 students reflecting the consolidation of the seats currently allocated to Match Community Day Charter Public School (700 seats) and Match Charter Public School (550 seats) and grade span of K1-12)

Location:	Boston
Maximum enrollment:	1250
Grade levels:	K1-12
Effective fiscal year:	2015

Provided further that, by April 1, 2015, the board of trustees of the Match Charter Public School will submit a minor amendment request to: (1) change its mission statement to include the words: "in particular, those would be the first in their families to earn a college degree. We intend this school to serve large numbers of English language learners." and (2) to change its enrollment policy to indicate that it will backfill vacancies through 9th grade.

The vote was 7-0-1. Ms. Calderón-Rosado abstained.

With respect to the conditions, Commissioner Chester said the Department has no concern about any problems; we just want to ensure Match has cleared the way for these innovative structures in light of the state ethics and retirement board rules.

VOTED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, in accordance with General Laws chapter 71, section 89, and 603 CMR 1.00, hereby imposes the following conditions on the charters of the Match Community Day Charter Public School and Match Charter Public School, as presented by the Commissioner:

- 1) As it relates to Match Community Day Charter Public School and Match Charter Public School and their associated private entities, current

members of the board of trustees and employees of Match Community Day Charter Public School and Match Charter Public School who also provide services to or hold a position in any capacity at any of the schools' associated private entities are required to request the advice of and a written opinion from the State Ethics Commission no later than March 14, 2014. Match Community Day Charter Public School and Match Charter Public School must provide copies of all written communications with the State Ethics Commission, including the requests for opinions and opinions received, to the Department within 15 days of being sent or received, and the schools and their employees shall implement the advice and opinions of the State Ethics Commission upon receipt.

- 2) Match Community Day Charter Public School and Match Charter Public School must contact the appropriate public employee retirement boards no later than March 14, 2014 to ensure that employee time has been properly reported. To the extent that reported time requires correction, Match Community Day Charter Public School and Match Charter Public School must correct that reported time as expeditiously as possible and to the satisfaction of the appropriate public employee retirement boards. No later than June 13, 2014, Match Community Day Charter Public School and Match Charter Public School must provide to the Department evidence of having met this condition.
- 3) Match Community Day Charter Public School and Match Charter Public School must change how they are represented on the website www.matcheducation.org and in all other materials, including those used for marketing, to clarify that Match Community Day Charter Public School and Match Charter Public School are public bodies governed by a board of trustees, and that Match Community Day Charter Public School and Match Charter Public School are not controlled or operated by any private entity, including any associated private entities. Any website used by Match Community Day Charter Public School and Match Charter Public School must indicate to the public clearly and unequivocally that the schools are public entities. No later than June 27, 2014, Match Community Day Charter Public School and Match Charter Public School must provide to the Department evidence of having met this condition.

In addition to meeting these conditions, Match Community Day Charter Public School and Match Charter Public School, like all charter schools, must also comply with the terms of their charters. The Commissioner shall review and report to the Board on the success or lack of success of Match Community Day Charter Public School and Match Charter Public School in meeting these conditions and, based upon his review, shall recommend such further action as he deems appropriate.

The vote was 7-0-1. Ms. Calderón-Rosado abstained.

Charter Renewal with Probation: Dorchester Collegiate Charter School

Commissioner Chester said he is concerned about the academic performance of the school, and noted the school is already taking steps to address the concerns. He said he is recommending

renewal with probation to signal serious concerns. In response to Chair Banta's timeline question, the commissioner clarified that the conditions have dates attached to them. Commissioner Chester said the Department is trying to give schools earlier signals about concerns and not wait until the charter is up for its second renewal. Mr. Chuang said the decision point will be in the fall of 2015. In response to Mr. Roach's question, Mr. Chuang said the charter school added two members to the board of trustees in the last month. Mr. DiTullio asked for clarification on the probation with conditions status. Mr. Chuang said a probationary status almost always comes with conditions that reflect improvements that must be made.

VOTED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, in accordance with General Laws chapter 71, section 89, and 603 CMR 1.13(4), hereby places the Dorchester Collegiate Academy Charter School on probation and directs the school to meet the following terms of probation, as recommended by the Commissioner:

1. Beginning in March 2014 and until further notice, DCACS must submit to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (Department), at charterschools@doe.mass.edu or 75 Pleasant St., Malden, MA, 02148, board meeting agendas, materials, and minutes prior to each board meeting at the same time that these items are sent to the school's board members. Additionally, if board materials do not already include this information, the school must also submit monthly financial statements.
2. By June 30, 2014, DCACS must submit a comprehensive evaluation of the school's mathematics and English language arts programs, including how such programs meet the needs of special education students and English language learners, conducted by an external consultant(s). Such consultant(s) must be acceptable to and approved in advance by the Department.
3. By July 31, 2014, DCACS must submit an action plan to the Department for approval. Such action plan must specify strategies to improve mathematics and English language arts performance, including the performance of special education students and English language learners. The action plan must address implementation of a proven curriculum and instruction program for mathematics and English language arts. The action plan must set clear and specific implementation benchmarks, with a clear timetable and deadlines for completion of key tasks, to allow the school's board of trustees and the Department to monitor implementation.
4. By July 31, 2014, DCACS must implement all key elements of its educational program model in alignment with its charter or request an amendment to its charter to accurately reflect the school's educational program.
5. By July 31, 2014, the school's board of trustees must have completed a comprehensive self-evaluation of its own capacity and must have recruited additional board members with needed expertise, as identified by the board of trustees and the Department.
6. By August 31, 2014, the school's board of trustees must engage in training conducted by an external consultant, acceptable to and approved in advance by the Department, on the roles and

responsibilities of a board of trustees for a charter school.

7. By September 30, 2014, the school's board of trustees must develop and implement a formal system of evaluation for the executive director.
8. By September 30, 2015, DCACS must demonstrate that it is an academic success by providing evidence that the school has met or is making substantial progress toward meeting benchmarks in its approved Accountability Plan and, in particular, has demonstrated significant and sustained academic improvement in mathematics and English language arts.
9. By September 30, 2015, DCACS must provide written evidence of consistent implementation of its educational program in alignment with its charter, including any approved amendment(s). The Department must be able to corroborate such evidence through the site visit process.

Further, that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, in accordance with General Laws chapter 71, section 89, and 603 CMR 1.00, hereby amends the charter granted to the following school, as presented by the Commissioner:

Dorchester Collegiate Academy Charter School (grades served changed from 4-12 to 4 - 8)

Location:	Boston
Maximum Enrollment:	238
Grades Served:	4-8
Effective year:	FY2015

In addition to meeting the terms of probation, Dorchester Collegiate Academy Charter School, like all charter schools, must also comply with the terms of its charter. The Commissioner shall review and report to the Board on the success or lack of success of Dorchester Collegiate Academy Charter School in meeting the terms of probation and its charter and, based upon his review, shall recommend such further action as he deems appropriate.

The vote was unanimous.

Proposed Contract with a Management Organization for Roxbury Preparatory Charter School

Mr. Chuang explained this is a procedural vote; the delegation is need for the timing of the contract in this case and is not a delegation of approval for all management contracts.

VOTED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education authorize the Commissioner, in accordance with General Laws c. 15, § 1F, paragraph 3, to act on behalf of the Board in approving the management contract between Roxbury Preparatory Charter School and Uncommon Schools, as required by General Laws chapter 71, section 89 (k)(5), and 603 CMR 1.00, following his legal and technical review of the contract and a vote by the board of trustees of Roxbury Preparatory Charter School.

on social science learning time for elementary school students, Ms. McKinnon said the Department does not track individual class time. Mr. Roach noted that since the loss of the federal Learn and Serve grant program, the last two years of service learning funding has targeted after-school programs. Mr. Roach said he is concerned about the decline in funding support and in the number of schools and educators who are able to participate.

Mr. DiTullio noted that the Department is the organizer for Student Government Day. The commissioner added the General Court also provides considerable support. Ms. Kaplan suggested encouraging voter registration among high school students. Mr. Brogan said getting students to register and vote would help them become active citizens. Ms. Calderón-Rosado asked about the status of the model curriculum units in diverse topics. Ms. Wheltle said there are at least 25 model units in each academic area, teachers are already piloting them, and the Department will be providing professional development this summer. Mr. Morton he has seen firsthand the power of community service learning to transform students' lives.

Commissioner Chester introduced Senator Richard Moore, Chair of the Special Commission on Civic Engagement; and commission members Representative David Vieira, Dr. Charles White of the Boston University School of Education, and Assistant Commissioner Shelley Tinkham of the Department of Higher Education. Senator Moore said Massachusetts has a history of commitment to public education to educate citizens for the workforce and active citizenship. He noted that Mass. General Laws Chapter 71, section 2 requires U.S. history and civics to be taught as required courses in all public elementary and high schools in the Commonwealth. Senator Moore said the commission looked at civics education in elementary and secondary grades, higher education, and adult education. Representative Vieira said Horace Mann created a public infrastructure in Massachusetts for history and civics education. He said civics education is vital for engaging citizens, and suggested the Board take a comprehensive look at how schools are implementing history and civics education.

Dr. Charles White, of the Boston University School of Education, said students learn to be citizens by participating in government. He recommended the College, Career, and Civic Life Framework as a resource. Department of Higher Education Assistant Commissioner Shelley Tinkham gave an overview of the Vision Project and the higher education strategic plan with respect to civic learning across the public higher education campuses. She said the study group saw some great work on a small scale, and there is a need for more resources and increased capacity on campuses. Senator Moore recommended some sort of assessment of civic education and local practices, to find out more about availability and quality. He suggested that students who participate in Student Government Day should reach out to other students when they return to their schools.

Chair Banta said tonight's presentation provided the Board with much food for thought. She said many interesting ideas were discussed, such as partnerships with organizations and capstone projects. Chair Banta suggested finding ways to spread these ideas without imposing additional mandates; student advisory councils might play a role. Ms. Kaplan said she hopes civic engagement will be elevated on a par with college and career readiness. Ms. Noyce asked about the three competencies outlined in the report and suggested reaching out to other organizations engaged in youth development. Mr. Morton said the YMCA should be a partner of the committee, since the YMCA has a youth in government program and it has been very successful with urban students. Mr. Brogan said the State Student Advisory Council is working on a model policy on digital learning and is interested in encouraging more participation through regional and local student councils. Mr. Roach said the key issue is bringing this work to scale; he suggested the Board should discuss how to set the tone and incorporate this into other statewide initiatives. Chair Banta thanked the presenters.

Commissioner Chester introduced Judi Allen, Director of History and Social Studies in the Malden Public Schools. She said the district incorporated civics into core courses with full force, despite having limited resources. She said while it was challenging preparing the curriculum, the topic engaged all students, not just a small handful. Ms. Allen showed the Board examples from the district's website for social studies and Generation Citizen. She said the program includes professional development, collaboration with Generation Citizen, and community partnerships.

Chair Banta commented that the Malden program illustrates that integration is key, so that civic education is not just one more add-on. Ms. Noyce said the integration approach is very strategic and gets everyone involved. Ms. Kaplan said she found the Malden example very encouraging.

Commissioner Chester thanked all the participants for a great conversation. He said the concept of a civic ethic is at the heart of this discussion. He described a visit the previous week with high school students participating in Gear Up, and said schools need a range of implementation strategies to give students the tools to contribute to the world they inhabit.

Chair Banta thanked the presenters and Board member David Roach for encouraging the Board to devote a special meeting to this topic.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:

VOTED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education adjourn the meeting at 7:05 pm, subject to the call of the chair.

The vote was unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,
Mitchell D. Chester
Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education
and Secretary to the Board

**Minutes of the Special Meeting
of the Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education**

Monday, March 24, 2014

5:07 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.

**Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
75 Pleasant Street, Malden, MA**

Members of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education Present:

Maura Banta, Chair, Melrose
Daniel Brogan, Chair, Student Advisory Council, Dennis
Vanessa Calderón-Rosado, Milton
Harneen Chernow, Vice-Chair, Jamaica Plain
James DiTullio, Designee of the Secretary of Education
James O'S. Morton, Springfield
Pendred Noyce, Weston
David Roach, Sutton

Mitchell D. Chester, Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education, Secretary to the Board

Members of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education Absent:

Karen Daniels, Milton
Ruth Kaplan, Brookline

Chair Banta called the meeting to order at 5:07 pm.

Massachusetts Business Alliance for Education (MBAE) Educational Benchmarking Study and Policy Report

Chair Banta welcomed Board members. Commissioner Chester said it is a real pleasure to have the Massachusetts Business Alliance for Education (MBAE) at the meeting to present its benchmarking study. The Commissioner said it is phenomenal that MBAE took on the task of looking at where education in Massachusetts stands and where we can move forward. MBAE Chair Henry Dinger and Executive Director Linda Noonan were joined as the presenters' table by the two authors of the report, Sir Michael Barber and Simon Day from Brightlines.

Mr. Dinger thanked the Board for opportunity to present their report "The New Opportunity to Lead: A Vision for Education in Massachusetts in the Next 20 Years." Mr. Dinger gave the Board an overview of MBAE's history starting with its establishment by Jack Rennie, role in helping to develop the Education Reform Act of 1993, and now as an education partner across the Commonwealth. Mr. Dinger said there is a disconnect between what students are learning and what employers and higher education expect and need. He said MBAE focused on where education in Massachusetts stacked up internationally, and what it would take for Massachusetts to become the best in the world. Ms. Noonan introduced a new poll of business executives conducted by MassINC Polling Group for MBAE, Associated Industries of Massachusetts and the Massachusetts Business Roundtable. She said the poll included in depth interviews, focus

groups, and a survey. The survey found that 69% of employers have difficulty hiring employees with the right skills to fill positions and 84% say the state's schools need moderate or major change.

Sir Michael Barber said it is a pleasure reviewing and working with a strong well led education system in Massachusetts. Mr. Barber said the report has a long term vision looking forward to 2030. He said Massachusetts is a high performing state that is pushing forward to become even better. Mr. Day said although Massachusetts is a top performer internationally, there are wide gaps between Massachusetts and the highest performing nations, such as Shanghai. Mr. Day said the six gaps outlined in the report are: employability, knowledge, achievement, opportunity, global, and top talent. Mr. Barber said two visions for Massachusetts are being a global leader in educational achievement and equity, and young people graduating from high school genuinely college and career ready with the knowledge, skills and competencies needed for lifelong learning and active citizenship in the 21st century. He said there is much more knowledge on how to approach reform, including the importance of the capacity to innovate and fidelity of implementation. Mr. Barber said you can mandate adequacy; you can't mandate greatness. It has to be unleashed. Mr. Day and Mr. Barber gave an overview of the report's recommendations around world class standards, curriculum, assessment, and student pathways; a future delivery system; world class teachers and leaders; unleashing innovation; closing the opportunity gap; and funding.

Dr. Calderón-Rosado said Massachusetts has not been complacent in moving education and achievement forward. Rather, she said reform has occurred at a whirlwind pace that is difficult for teachers and administrators. Dr. Calderón-Rosado asked if the business community would be willing to pay for increased attention to resources. Mr. Barber said the report recognizes that Massachusetts is not complacent. He said many would like to slow down the pace of reform; however, it is not the time to step away. Mr. Dinger said business leaders are willing to invest strategically toward initiatives that have a proven track record and are allocated transparently. Chair Banta said she is interested in the funding topic and getting funds closer to students is a goal shared by many. Mr. Day said incentives should be built into funding to reward success. He also noted that schools do not have control of their budget, but are held accountable for results. Chair Banta said Lawrence is a great example of the value of school level decision making and the redesign of the central office's role.

Dr. Noyce said many recommendations require legislative changes. She asked what recommendations the Board could specifically do. Mr. Day said the Board and the state should continue discussions on what it would take for Massachusetts to be at the top internationally. He said students need a broad range of real world skills and abilities, and many of the recommendations will support and drive that goal forward. Ms. Noonan said MBAE is going to analyze current statutes and assess how the recommendations can be brought to life. Vice Chair Chernow said some initiatives highlighted in the report have seen mixed results, and a strong district could lead to equity and opportunities for students. Mr. Day said programs with wrap around services were included within the report, referring one such program, CityConnects.

Dr. Calderón-Rosado left the meeting at 6:35 p.m.

Mr. Roach said the historic purpose of schools has always been to develop effective citizens. Mr. Barber said the fundamental goals of education go hand in hand with citizenship and employability. Mr. Roach noted a recent visit to an alternative school where many students have social emotional needs and unstable home lives. Mr. Barber said social challenges are broadly defined in the report, but are an integral part of addressing a student's needs. Ms. Noonan said it

is time to reassess the role of schools in the community. She said schools are expected to do things they were not designed to do. Mr. DiTullio said many of Massachusetts schools specifically address social needs such as innovation schools and districts with family engagement centers. He said universal pre-kindergarten was strongly promoted by the Governor because it addresses achievement gaps and social-emotional needs of children early on. Ms. Noonan said Brightlines and MBAE recognize that one initiative isn't going to change the education system, but intertwined goals and initiatives that yield results will.

Commissioner Chester thanked MBAE, Sir Michael Barber, and Mr. Day for their presentation to the Board. He said the report is very provocative, and smart to challenge Massachusetts on where they should go from here.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:

VOTED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education adjourn the meeting at 7:00 pm, subject to the call of the chair.

The vote was unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,
Mitchell D. Chester
Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education
and Secretary to the Board

**Minutes of the Regular Meeting
of the Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education**

Tuesday, March 25, 2014

8:35 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

**Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
75 Pleasant Street, Malden, MA**

Members of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education Present:

Maura Banta, Chair, Melrose
Daniel Brogan, Chair, Student Advisory Council, Dennis
Vanessa Calderón-Rosado, Milton
Harneen Chernow, Vice-Chair, Jamaica Plain
Ruth Kaplan, Brookline
Matthew Malone, Secretary of Education, Roslindale
James O'S. Morton, Springfield
Pendred Noyce, Weston
David Roach, Sutton

Mitchell D. Chester, Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education, Secretary to the Board

Member of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education Absent:

Karen Daniels, Milton

Chair Banta called the meeting to order at 8:35 am.

Comments from the Chair

Chair Banta said U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan recently visited Massachusetts. The Chair attended visits to Orchard Gardens School in Boston and to the Arthur W. Coolidge Middle School in Reading, where the Secretary engaged in a discussion with educators and students about the new education standards. Chair Banta said she attended a National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE) conference. She noted that many colleagues in other states were eager to discuss the Massachusetts student board member. Chair Banta asked for reports from the chairs of the Board committees that met recently. Dr. Noyce provided an overview of the Commissioner's Performance Evaluation Committee, which met recently to review this year's performance criteria. Chair Banta said the Budget Committee met yesterday to hear from Bill Oates, the Commonwealth's Chief Information Officer, and the Executive Office of Education's Chief Information Officer Sharon Wright about the proposed EOE IT Consolidation.

Comments from the Commissioner

Commissioner Chester said Secretary Duncan was impressed with the work happening in our districts across Massachusetts. The Commissioner joined Secretary Duncan during visits to Worcester Technical High School, Arthur W. Coolidge Middle School in Reading, and Match

Charter Public School in Boston. Commissioner Chester noted that a tentative agreement had been reached on a new contract agreement between Lawrence Public Schools and the Lawrence Teachers Union. The Commissioner recognized the important work of the American Federation of Teachers and Lawrence Teachers Union President Frank McLaughlin. Commissioner Chester said the Lawrence agreement will be a model for other districts moving forward.

Comments from the Secretary

Secretary Malone said the Legislature is currently in the middle of their budget process, and the House Ways and Means budget should be released the second week of April. Secretary Malone said the fact that agencies were level funded was a victory, and the Governor budget's largest increases were in education. The Secretary said the school safety and security taskforce is moving forward with recommendations and resources for schools and districts. The Secretary said the Board will hear another update from the literacy working group in the spring. Secretary Malone recommended the Information Technology Office appear each year to provide an update to the Board. Secretary Malone updated the Board on his school visits around the state. He noted a recent meeting with members of British Parliament regarding education best practices and goals.

Public Comment

1. Charles Lyons, Superintendent/Director, Shawsheen Valley Technical High School, addressed the Board on the Career and Vocational-Technical Education Regulations.
2. Roger Bourgeois, Superintendent/Director, Greater Lowell Regional Vocational Technical School addressed the Board on the Career and Vocational-Technical Education Regulations.
3. Edward Bouquillon, Superintendent/Director, Minuteman Regional Technical Vocational High School addressed the Board on the Career and Vocational-Technical Education Regulations.
4. Judith Klimkiewicz, Superintendent, Nashoba Valley Technical High School addressed the Board on the Career and Vocational-Technical Education Regulations.
5. Michael Fitzpatrick, Superintendent/Director, Blackstone Valley Vocational Regional School District addressed the Board on the Career and Vocational-Technical Education Regulations.
6. John McDonough, Interim Superintendent of Boston Public Schools, addressed the Board on the Career and Vocational-Technical Education Regulations.
7. Senator Patricia Jehlen addressed the Board on the proposed charter school regulations.
8. Tracy O'Connell Novick, Worcester School Committee member, addressed the Board on the proposed charter school regulations.
9. Barbara Donnelly, Parent, addressed the Board on the Dever Elementary School turnaround.
10. Lisa Guisbond, Executive Director at Citizens for Public Schools, and a parent from Boston addressed the Board on the Dever and Holland Elementary turnarounds.
11. Matthew Cregor, Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights and Economic Justice, addressed the Board on the proposed student discipline regulations.
12. Thomas Mela, MA Advocates for Children, addressed the Board on the proposed student discipline regulations.

Approval of Minutes

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:

VOTED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education approve the minutes of the February 24, 2014 special meeting and the February 25, 2014 regular meeting.

The vote was unanimous.

MBAE Educational Benchmarking Study and Policy Report: Recap of March 24th Special Meeting

Chair Banta gave Board members a recap of the Monday special meeting presentation on the Massachusetts Business Alliance for Education's (MBAE) new benchmarking study on Massachusetts. Chair Banta said the purpose of the report is to look at Massachusetts, how the state ranks internationally, and how to continue successes. Secretary Malone said the report does not fully address the work our educators did over the past twenty years. The Secretary said the Commonwealth has done great work, made progress, and continues to see results. Dr. Noyce noted that she had the same reaction initially, but presenters did recognize the Commonwealth's successes. Commissioner Chester said the Commonwealth has seen great success, which is a tribute to the work of our educators, school, districts, and state leadership. The Commissioner said Massachusetts must capitalize on its successes to ensure a high quality education for all students.

Career and Vocational-Technical Education: Review of Policies Relating to Program Approval and Enrollment

Commissioner Chester said there is a great interest in career and vocational-technical education, as evidenced through the speakers in this morning's public comment period. He said unlike other states, Massachusetts has an excellent vocational-technical education system. The commissioner said the working group began as a pro-active effort to hear from superintendents, educators, and policy makers on successes and concerns. He said the discussion will eventually lead to regulatory changes, including Chapter 74 program approvals, Chapter 74 program admissions, non-resident tuition rates, exploratory programs, transportation limits for non-resident students, and expanded opportunities for career education.

Deputy Commissioner Jeff Wulfson said the topics outlined will be the basis of regulations, and the majority of public comment is consistent with the policies the Department is presenting. He said the intention of the regulatory changes is not to diminish high standards for vocational-technical education. In response to Dr. Noyce's question, Mr. Wulfson said twenty percent of high school students are part of a vocational-technical program. Chair Banta asked if program approval is linked to the need of the current workforce. Mr. Wulfson said the program approval process needs to be strengthened to assess the need for a program and the labor market. He also noted the Department's work with the Massachusetts School Building Authority to assess the need for new vocational technical building construction.

Ms. Kaplan noted her concerns about current admission processes. Vice Chair Chernow said that while she understands that schools want to reward seats on merit, every student who would like to attend deserves an opportunity to explore vocational-technical education. Mr. Wulfson said the timing of the regulatory changes do have a fiscal impact. He said the Department needs to

provide adequate notice to districts, allow time for public comment, and discussion. Dr. Noyce requested the Board hold a future special meeting to discuss vocational-technical education in greater detail. Mr. Roach said he has some concerns regarding the Department's capacity to work through and respond to all of the issues presented in public comment. Mr. Wulfson said there has been a leadership shortage in the vocational-technical unit, but the Department has a great staff. Mr. Roach said a large part of the public comment around this issue seems to be about money. He said a balance must be found on admissions policies.

Ms. Kaplan had to leave the meeting at 10:20 a.m.

Update on Level 5 Schools

Commissioner Chester said preliminary turnaround plans have been issued, and reminded Board members of the process and timelines outlined by law. He reminded Board members that four years ago the schools were indentified for low performance and have not shown improved results. The Commissioner said he has a commitment to upgrade the results for the children in these low performing schools. The Commissioner said the receivership of a school within the larger district is slightly different and more complicated then the receivership of an entire district.

Vice Chair Chernow thanked parents for attending the Board meeting and voicing their concerns and ideas. She asked for clarification between the Level 4 turnaround plans and the work of Level 5 turnaround. Vice Chair Chernow also inquired about the dual language program at the Dever School and the timelines of the law aligning with parent school choice decisions. Commissioner Chester said he is very sensitive to the concerns about the dual language program and has been open to feedback. However, the Commissioner noted that a thorough review of the program found that it was not strong, presented a large undertaking for teachers, and was not providing the type of results needed for students. Commissioner Chester said he continues to look at the various options. But students without access to strong literacy in two languages are condemned to a diminished future.

Dr. Calderón-Rosado said the conversations about turnaround are hard, but something needs to be done to improve the outcomes for students. She said it is discouraging that the dual language program is not moving forward, and asked what it would take to make it work. Commissioner Chester said the turnaround operator selected for Dever Elementary (Blueprint Schools Network) currently works with other schools in Boston. The Commissioner said tremendous improvement, particularly with English language learners, occurred during Blueprint's work in other schools across the country, such as Houston and Denver.

Manuel Monteiro from the Commissioner's Office said the intent is to have separate turnaround plans, and thus separate working conditions for the schools. He said a revised compensation model is not complete yet. Mr. Monteiro said that at New Bedford's Parker School, the model educator contract is very specific to their turnaround plan.

Secretary Malone said the Commonwealth and the Board have the responsibility to educate students and particular populations such as English language learners. He said this is a great opportunity to incorporate cultural competencies and multiple language models. Secretary Malone said teachers, students, and parents are at the core of this turnaround work. Commissioner Chester said the turnaround status is not a reflection of the effort and commitment of faculty, but given the track record, we must do better for our students. He noted that in the assessment of the dual language program, if it was possible to elevate it to a high quality

program that would have been an option. However, the program was found to be far from adequate.

Secretary Malone had to leave the meeting at 11:20 a.m. The Secretary's designee, James DiTullio, took the Secretary's place.

Amendment to Charter School Regulations, 603 CMR 1.00

Commissioner Chester reminded Board members that the proposed regulations were sent out for public comment in December. He said that among other changes, the amended regulations provide for alignment with the metrics used for the state accountability system, to the extent permitted by law. He explained that the regulations align the weighting of indicators used to calculate school and district levels for the state's accountability system with the weighting used in calculations to identify the lowest performing 10 percent of districts that are subject to charter school tuition charges, and will allow the use of growth for the first time when calculating the lowest performing 10 percent of districts.

Deputy Commissioner Jeff Wulfson said the ratio of achievement and growth was revisited with stakeholders, and the calculations will include a larger proportion of growth. He noted that the final proportion of growth to achievement has not been determined yet. Commissioner Chester said the U.S. Department of Education is offering states that have an Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) flexibility waiver the opportunity to apply for a one-year extension of their waiver. He said the calculation used for accountability measures is part of the waiver, and the Board will have an opportunity to review the waiver.

Vice Chair Chernow said the Proficiency Gap Committee recently met to discuss growth and the Progress and Performance Index (PPI), which impacts many policy decisions. Mr. Wulfson said regardless of the waiver, the charter school and traditional school accountability systems should be more closely aligned. Associate Commissioner Cliff Chuang said the regulations include an added section on board of trustee training. He said the Department is continuing to track and address transparency in response to the Board's feedback. Mr. Chuang also noted that the charter amendment requests that came forward recently were analyzed based upon the proposed changes, and charter schools have committed to addressing concerns around attrition, access, and equity. Mr. Roach noted that charter school financial and organizational information would be helpful for looking at successful models. Mr. Chuang said charter school annual reports highlight some of that information, and the new charter school dashboard will show financial information. Mr. DiTullio said the regulations are strong, but he is uncomfortable that it is the last time the Board will formally vote on the accountability calculation. Commissioner Chester said he would bring the accountability changes and ESEA waiver to the Board for further discussion and a vote.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:

VOTED: **that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, in accordance with G.L. chapter 69, § 1B, and chapter 71, § 89, and having solicited and reviewed public comment in accordance with the Administrative Procedure Act, G.L. chapter 30A, § 3, hereby adopts the amendments to the regulations for Charter Schools, 603 CMR 1.00, as presented by the Commissioner.**

The vote was 7-0-1. Vice Chair Chernow abstained.

Regulations on Commonwealth of Massachusetts Virtual Schools (Adoption of 603 CMR 52.00; Technical Amendment to Special Education Regulations, 603 CMR 28.00; and Repeal of Regulations on Virtual Innovation Schools, 603 CMR 48.00)

Commissioner Chester said based upon the comments received during the public comment period, there were a number of revisions to the proposed regulations for Commonwealth of Massachusetts Virtual Schools. The Commissioner said the Department also solicited feedback from a wide range of stakeholders during the drafting period. Mr. Chuang said the regulations do apply to the current virtual schools.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:

VOTED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, in accordance with G.L. c. 69, § 1B; G.L. c. 71, § 94; and chapter 379 of the acts of 2012, and having solicited and reviewed public comment in accordance with the Administrative Procedure Act, G.L. chapter 30A, § 3, hereby adopts the regulations for Commonwealth of Massachusetts Virtual Schools, 603 CMR 52.00; and the technical amendments to regulations for Special Education, 603 CMR 28.00; and hereby repeals certain provisions of the Innovation Schools Regulations, 603 CMR 48.00; as presented by the Commissioner.

The vote was unanimous.

Chair Banta had to leave the meeting at 12:00 p.m. Vice Chair Chernow presided.

Overview of HiSET, New High School Equivalency Exam

Commissioner Chester said the Department decided to hold an open procurement to select a test vendor for a new high school equivalency exam for Massachusetts over the next three years. The Commissioner said request for responses were issued last August, and proposals were submitted by three vendors. The Department selected the HiSET™ test offered by the Educational Testing Service (ETS) as the state's new high school equivalency assessment.

Jolanta Conway, acting director of the Department's Adult and Community Learning Services unit, said the high school equivalency exam will gradually transition to a computerized assessment aligned to the *College and Career Readiness Standards for Adult Education*. She said the exam will be available in paper-and-pencil and computer form, as well as English and Spanish. Ms. Conway said 26 of the previous 28 GED centers are transitioning to administer the HiSET exam. Ms. Conway outlined the two test battery options.

Ms. Conway introduced Jason Carter and Deborah Shine of ETS to give an overview of the exam. Ms. Shine gave the Board background information on ETS' involvement with high school equivalency exams. Ms. Shine said eleven other states chose HiSET as their high school equivalency exam. Mr. Carter said test centers do not pay for test materials, shipping, or licensing. He said that free or low-cost preparation materials are available, including: free sample items and practice tests, free ETS study companions, and additional low-cost practice tests with formative (diagnostic) information. Mr. Carter said ETS offers the full range of HiSET support for test takers, test center administrators, including trainings that were recently done with all Massachusetts centers.

Mr. Brogan asked if the price of the test would vary in the future. Deputy Commissioner Wulfson said the price will be locked in for the length of the three year contract. Mr. Carter also noted that many organizations provide scholarships or voucher programs for their constituents. Ms. Conway said that in 2013, 14,000 people took the GED exam and 70 percent passed. Ms. Conway said Newton and Milford decided not to move forward with administering the exam due to diminished resources. Mr. Morton asked about the payment process. Mr. Carter said having payments done online alleviates testing centers, but they have brought groups together to register at the centers, and there is a program to convert cash to payment.

Update on PARCC

Commissioner Chester said today is the second day of the first of two administration windows for this spring's PARCC field test. Approximately 81,000 Massachusetts students are participating in the field test this spring. Senior Associate Commissioner Bob Bickerton said the Department has had over 40 public outreach meetings to date on PARCC. He said two thirds of students are taking the online portion, while one third are taking the paper version. Mr. Bickerton said there have been a few bumps in the road during the administration, but the assessment is very promising. He reminded Board members that Burlington and Revere are participating in a research study to draw lessons from the field test.

Mr. Roach said it is important to remember that this is a field test, and there will be issues that arise. He said the Board is being measured in the review of the assessment, and the potential it holds deserves our attention and patience. Dr. Calderón-Rosado agreed with Mr. Roach's comments, and noted that her own child, a seventh grader, was scheduled to participate, but due to issues it did not happen. She said it can be little things that make or break initiatives, and schools must be supported. Vice Chair Chernow asked about field test results. Mr. Bickerton said the intent of the field test is to test the items – not the students – so no results are possible. He said many of the items test the same standards as MCAS and will be compared. Mr. DiTullio said questions from parents regarding opting their children out of the field test do a great disservice to Massachusetts impacting and evaluating the assessment. Mr. Bickerton said the Department has been working with stakeholders to communicate the correct information to parents, as there is a lot of misinformation going around. Commissioner Chester recognized the work of Bob Bickerton, Maureen LaCroix, and educator fellows to inform stakeholders across the Commonwealth about PARCC. He said this is a great opportunity for schools to try out the test and provide feedback.

Amendment Request from Benjamin Franklin Classical Charter Public School

Commissioner Chester said the charter school is very successful and currently has a waitlist. He said he supports the request to expand enrollment and become a regional charter school. Associate Commissioner Cliff Chuang said the Department has been in communication with the school to meet the criteria, including their commitment to backfill through all grade spans. He said the charter school is one of the oldest and is high performing, and the expansion request will also assist in expanding their diversity. Mr. Chuang said particular demographics in the area are low and that is reflected in the population of the school. He said the expansion will allow the school to reach a larger number of families. Mr. Roach asked about the schools facilities. Mr. Chuang confirmed that the school is looking to relocate to facilities that will meet their needs, including their ability to offer more programs.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:

VOTED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, in accordance with General Laws chapter 71, section 89, and 603 CMR 1.00, hereby amends the charter granted to the following school, as presented by the Commissioner:

Benjamin Franklin Classical Charter Public School (enrollment increase from 450 to 900; regional charter serving Bellingham, Blackstone/Millville, Franklin, Holliston, Hopedale, Medway, Mendon/Upton, Milford, Millis, Norfolk, Plainville, Walpole, and Wrentham)

Location:	Franklin
Charter Region:	Bellingham, Blackstone/Millville, Franklin, Holliston, Hopedale, Medway, Mendon/Upton, Milford, Millis, Norfolk, Plainville, Walpole, and Wrentham
Maximum Enrollment:	900
Grades Served:	K-8
Effective year:	FY2015

Benjamin Franklin Classical Charter Public School shall be operated in accordance with the provisions of General Laws chapter 71, section 89, and 603 CMR 1.00 and all other applicable state and federal laws and regulations and such additional conditions as the Commissioner may from time to time establish, all of which shall be deemed conditions of the charter.

The vote was unanimous.

Update on State and Federal Education Budget

Chief Financial Officer Bill Bell said the Department is waiting for the next step in the budget process, which is the release of the House Ways and Means budget recommendation and subsequent floor debate of the budget. Mr. Bell said the federal budget for FY14-15 shows modest growth to district accounts. He said that among the Board's priorities are continued support for turnaround work, RETELL, and the option for districts to choose MCAS or PARCC. Mr. Bell said the technology bond bill is still in the Senate Committee on Bonding.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:

VOTED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education adjourn the meeting at 1:00 pm, subject to the call of the chair.

The vote was unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,
Mitchell D. Chester
Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education
and Secretary to the Board

**Minutes of the Regular Meeting
of the Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education**

**Tuesday, May 20, 2014
8:40 a.m. – 12:40 p.m.**

**Dennis-Yarmouth Regional High School
210 Station Ave., South Yarmouth, MA**

Members of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education Present:

Maura Banta, Chair, Melrose
Harneen Chernow, Vice-Chair, Jamaica Plain
Daniel Brogan, Chair, Student Advisory Council, Dennis
Karen Daniels, Milton
Ruth Kaplan, Brookline
Matthew Malone, Secretary of Education
Pendred Noyce, Weston
David Roach, Sutton

Mitchell D. Chester, Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education, Secretary to the Board

Members of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education Absent:

Vanessa Calderón-Rosado, Milton
James O'S. Morton, Springfield

Comments from the Chair

Chair Banta called the meeting to order at 8:40 a.m. She said it is a pleasure to be in Dennis-Yarmouth, the district of student member Daniel Brogan. She thanked the district for hosting the Board. Chair Banta congratulated Nathan Han, a high school student in Boston, winner of the 2014 Gordon E. Moore Award at the Intel International Science and Engineering Fair for developing a machine learning software tool to study mutations of a gene linked to breast cancer and ovarian cancer. Chair Banta also informed the Board that she will be participating on the National Taskforce on Career Readiness.

Comments from the Commissioner

Commissioner Chester thanked the superintendent and principal for inviting the Board to meet at Dennis-Yarmouth High School. He congratulated Jeffrey Shea of Belmont High School, 2015 Massachusetts Teacher of the Year. The commissioner reported that the National Assessment Governing Board held a meeting in Boston last week. As part of the visit, Commissioner Chester participated in an event at Revere High School focused on the academic preparedness of the nation's 12th graders. He said a team from the U.S. Department of Education is in Massachusetts this week to review Race to the Top progress. Commissioner Chester said he recently testified at the Senate Committee on Bonding in support of the IT bond bill, which would provide infrastructure technology funding for schools.

Comments from the Secretary

Secretary Malone thanked the Dennis-Yarmouth school district for hosting the Board. He updated the Board on the state budget. The secretary reported that the school safety and security taskforce will release its recommendations in July. Secretary Malone noted an article in the Worcester Telegram & Gazette on innovation schools. He updated the Board on his recent school visits.

Approval of Minutes

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:

VOTED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education approve the minutes of the April 28, 2014 special meeting and the April 29, 2014 regular meeting.

The minutes were approved 8-0-1. Ruth Kaplan abstained.

Welcome from Dennis-Yarmouth Public Schools

Chair Banta presented student member Daniel Brogan with a citation for his year of service on the Board. Commissioner Chester said Daniel has been a great contributor to the Board, and his family and school district should be proud. Mr. Brogan expressed his gratitude to the Board and said this year has been a great experience for him.

Superintendent Carol Woodbury said she is very proud of the work happening in Dennis-Yarmouth. She gave the Board an overview of the district's student population and academic achievements. Superintendent Woodbury presented on various district-wide initiatives including professional learning time, multiple teacher pathways, full-day kindergarten, and technology upgrades. Dennis-Yarmouth Regional High School Principal Kenneth Jenks presented on school achievements and programs, including a robotics team, arts and music programs, student mentoring, athletics, and a bridge-to-college program. The Board watched a student-produced video on the Dennis-Yarmouth Regional School District.

Secretary Malone said the district is doing a wonderful job engaging students and has made real progress on student indicators over the past ten years. He encouraged the district to continue its work to establish a student exchange program and to consider an early college high school model. Commissioner Chester said most people do not realize Cape Cod is a year-round community with great diversity, economically and otherwise. He commended Superintendent Woodbury for her leadership in the district and statewide. In response to Vice-Chair Chernow's question, Superintendent Woodbury said more young people are returning to Cape Cod after college. She said there is a particular need for health care workers and the area is always trying to draw young professionals back to the area. Principal Jenks said the district accepts the challenges of its student population and works to ensure opportunities for all students.

Update on Level 5 Schools

Chair Banta said the previous evening's special meeting on the Parker School Level 5 turnaround plan was a very thoughtful meeting and a learning process. She said the June 9 special meeting,

which involves three school plans, will start at 3 p.m. to ensure ample time for all appellants. Commissioner Chester reminded Board members of the Level 5 appeal process. He said the Board will review the Morgan, Holland, and Dever School appeals at the June 9 special meeting.

Engagement of the Field on Major Initiatives

Commissioner Chester said the Department has committed to strengthening two-way communications with the various statewide professional organizations, as well as the larger field. Associate Commissioner Heather Peske gave the Board an overview of the teacher advisory cabinet and the two statewide principal cabinets that the Department has organized to inform state policy decisions and the agency's work with the field. Ms. Peske introduced two members of the teacher advisory cabinet, Robert Powers of Apponequet Regional High School and Ann McConchie of Nauset Regional Middle School. Mr. Powers said collaboration has a powerful impact on student achievement. He said the Department has been active in engaging the field in the policy and reform work, and added that he has seen the cabinet's feedback reflected in policies and guidance. Ms. McConchie said it is important for teachers to feel valued and provide input, and that she appreciates how the cabinet has influenced policies and communications at the Department. She also said the cabinet is a positive way for practitioners to bring best practices and policies back to the district.

Secretary Malone commended the Department's initiative in setting up these advisory cabinets, and thanked the teachers for participating. In response to Ms. Kaplan's questions, Ms. Peske said in the early stages of the cabinet, the Department set the agendas, but now the agendas have expanded to include presentations from staff members and issues brought forward by cabinet members. Mr. Powers said it is refreshing to work with Department staff who are helpful and always available. In response to Mr. Roach's question, Ms. McConchie said a lot of work on district-determined measures is happening on the district level and her district already has common assessments. Mr. Powers said the initial reaction to district-determined measures was concern, but the actual work of creating and evaluating measures has sparked a great conversation on growth and student achievement. Commissioner Chester said he appreciates the thoughtful feedback from the teacher advisory cabinet and he takes concerns from the field seriously.

Secretary Malone had to leave the meeting at 10:20 a.m. The Secretary's designee, James DiTullio, took the Secretary's place.

Maureen LaCroix, of the Department, introduced Thomas Scott, Executive Director of the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents (MASS), and Barnstable Public Schools Superintendent Mary Czajkowski, who is the President of MASS. Ms. LaCroix gave the Board an overview of the Department's superintendents' advisory council.

Superintendent Czajkowski said the advisory council creates a means of clear communication between the Department and superintendents on various projects and topics. She said that last year, superintendents expressed frustration about the Department's communications, and the Commissioner and MASS used this as an opportunity to set up a better channel for two-way communication. Superintendent Czajkowski said through the Commissioner's leadership, communication has significantly improved, and the Department values input from the field, anticipates questions, and openly listens to concerns and suggestions.

Mr. Scott said it is vital that communications be two-way, timely, and occur at the developmental stage of policy-making. He said his membership finds the volume of local, state, and federal

initiatives overwhelming. He also noted that superintendent turnover is about 15 percent, and 50 percent of superintendents have been in their role for less than three years. Mr. Scott said the Department has been very responsive and superintendents now feel much better supported. Superintendent Czajkowski offered two examples: the checklist for superintendents that the Department produced on the new student discipline law, as requested by the superintendents' advisory council, and the Commissioner's work with the MASS around PARCC.

Chair Banta thanked Mr. Scott and Superintendent Czajkowski for their leadership in the MASS and for joining the Commissioner in this effort. Commissioner Chester added that he appreciates the Board's encouragement of these outreach initiatives. He commended the MASS for its great leadership and problem-solving approach.

State Student Advisory Council End-of-Year Report

Mr. Brogan thanked his peers for their participation, hard work, and passion on the State Student Advisory Council. He said this year the council amended its bylaws around meeting requirements and focused on digital literacy, including the school technology speed test. Mr. Brogan said many schools and classrooms still lack the capacity to integrate technology into everyday teaching and learning. He gave Board members an overview of the council's report on digital literacy and learning.

In response to Chair Banta's question, Mr. Brogan said there is generally positive feedback on the bring-your-own-device policy. Mr. Brogan said he appreciates the feedback from the Board and various organizations throughout the process. He said there is a lot of interest on the State Student Advisory Council to continue the focus on digital literacy next year.

Grade 12 National Assessment of Educational Progress Results

Commissioner Chester said Massachusetts has participated in the NAEP assessment of English language arts and mathematics in grades four and eight with every other state, and our students have been at the top or tied for the top for five straight administrations of the assessment. Commissioner Chester noted that while Massachusetts is above the national average, the results have been flat across multiple years. He added that while the graduation rate has increased, not all students are graduating with the skills needed for success after high school. Commissioner Chester gave the Board an overview of a recent report on NAEP results compared to PISA results, titled "Not Just the Problem of Other People's Children: U.S. Student Performance in Global Perspective." He pointed out the chart on page 17 of the report, which highlights another way of looking at performance gaps.

Update on PARCC

Commissioner Chester informed that Board that he recently testified at the Senate Bonding Committee hearing and advocated for school technology upgrades. Bob Bickerton, of the Department, updated the Board on the Department's communications with the field, including: weekly webinars with school districts, a listening tour to hear the experiences of educators who participated in the PARCC field test, and meetings with superintendents and school committees. Mr. Bickerton said superintendents now have materials to inform their decision on whether to choose PARCC or MCAS for the 2014-2015 school year, as part of the two-year "test drive." In response to Vice-Chair Chernow's question on the PARCC student survey, Mr. Bickerton said the mathematics section of the assessment seems to be more difficult and confusing for students, and the test contractor will have to address those issues before 2015. Ms. Kaplan shared her

experience of speaking with educators and parents in Brookline who had concerns after taking the sample PARCC assessment. Mr. DiTullio said the overall experience with the PARCC field test has been fairly positive, though technology is still an issue. Commissioner Chester said while other states have moved ahead with new assessments, the Board appropriately decided to try out PARCC over two years so that the issues could be studied and addressed before the Board makes a final decision. He said he remains hopeful that the test will measure up to our standards for the next generation of student assessment.

Update on FY 2015 State Education Budget

Bill Bell, the Department's Chief Financial Officer, distributed a memo and reviewed the budget recommendations from the Senate Ways and Means Committee (SWM), which were released a few days ago. He noted that the SWM budget supported increases for RETELL and PARCC. Mr. Bell said overall funding for school and district turnaround work is flat or declining. He said the Senate floor debate on the budget begins this week. Chair Banta asked about statewide funding for substance abuse and mental health counselors. Mr. Bell said grants would be created for support services in schools. Vice-Chair Chernow noted a decrease in connecting activities funds. In response to Ms. Kaplan's question, Mr. Bell said innovation schools were funded in the Senate, but not the House budget; therefore this will be decided in the conference committee.

Commissioner Chester asked Board members to review the 2014-2015 proposed meeting schedule. Chair Banta and Commissioner Chester thanked Superintendent Woodbury and Principal Jenks for their hospitality in welcoming the Board to Dennis-Yarmouth.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:

VOTED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education adjourn the meeting at 12:40 p.m., subject to the call of the chair.

The vote was unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,
Mitchell D. Chester
Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education
and Secretary to the Board

**Minutes of the Regular Meeting
of the Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education**

**Tuesday, June 24, 2014
8:35 a.m. – 12:55 p.m.**

**Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
75 Pleasant Street, Malden, MA**

Members of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education Present:

Maura Banta, Chair, Melrose
Harneen Chernow, Vice-Chair, Jamaica Plain
Daniel Brogan, Chair, Student Advisory Council, Dennis
Vanessa Calderón-Rosado, Milton
Karen Daniels, Milton
Ruth Kaplan, Brookline
Matthew Malone, Secretary of Education
James O'S. Morton, Springfield
Pendred Noyce, Weston
David Roach, Sutton

Mitchell D. Chester, Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education, Secretary to the Board

Comments from the Chair

Chair Banta called the meeting to order at 8:35 a.m. She welcomed Donald Willyard, newly elected chair of the State Student Advisory Council, who will serve as a member of the Board in FY2015. She acknowledged the work of Board member Daniel Brogan, outgoing chair of the council, and thanked Ruth Kaplan for her service on the Board as an advocate for parents, students, and special education. Chair Banta reviewed highlights from the Board's June 23 special meeting on educator preparation and school and classroom culture.

Comments from the Commissioner

Commissioner Chester noted that outstanding educators were honored at the State House on June 12, including the 2015 Massachusetts Teacher of the Year, Dr. Jeffrey Shea of Belmont High School. He welcomed Donald Willyard to the Board and thanked Mr. Brogan for his service. Commissioner Chester acknowledged outgoing Board member Ruth Kaplan. He informed Board members of a recent article in the *Boston Globe* on students' plans after high school. Commissioner Chester said Massachusetts was recently highlighted by the U.S. Department of Education for its focus on special education outcomes, rather than solely on compliance and process. The commissioner informed the Board he expects to present proposed amendments to the regulations on restraint and seclusion in September. He noted the booklet that was distributed about seniors at Dean Vocational Technical High School in Holyoke. Commissioner Chester introduced three new Department staff members to the Board: Jackie Reis, media relations coordinator; Jessica Leitz, director of external partnerships; and Russell Johnston, senior associate commissioner for accountability, partnerships, and technical assistance.

Comments from the Secretary

Secretary Malone noted President Obama's recent commencement address at Worcester Technical High School. Secretary Malone said the state budget is in conference committee and highlighted the IT bond bill and economic development bill. He said he attended the inclusive concurrent enrollment program (ICE) graduation at Bridgewater State University; ICE programs are funded through the state budget to support high school students with disabilities on college campuses. He thanked outgoing Massachusetts Teachers Association President Paul Toner for his partnership with the state.

Comments from the Public

1. Paul Toner, outgoing Massachusetts Teachers Association President, addressed the Board.
2. Lisa Guisbond, executive director of Citizens for Public Schools, addressed the Board on PARCC.
3. Jen Rosewood, a teacher at Brookline High School, addressed the Board on PARCC.
4. Senator Pat Jehlen addressed the Board on school and district accountability and weighting of achievement and growth.
5. Representative Denise Provost addressed the Board on school and district accountability and weighting of achievement and growth.
6. Paul Georges, President of United Teachers of Lowell, addressed the Board on school and district accountability and weighting of achievement and growth.
7. Ann O'Halloran, of Citizens for Public Schools, addressed the Board on school and district accountability and weighting of achievement and growth.
8. Shannah Varon, Executive Director of Boston Collegiate Charter School, addressed the Board on school and district accountability and weighting of achievement and growth.
9. Janine Matho, Deputy Director of the Massachusetts Charter Public School Association, addressed the Board on school and district accountability and weighting of achievement and growth.
10. Mary Battenfeld, a parent from Jamaica Plain, addressed the Board on school and district accountability and weighting of achievement and growth.
11. John Griffin, a former SSAC member, addressed the Board on school and district accountability and weighting of achievement and growth.
12. Linda Noonan, Executive Director of the Massachusetts Business Alliance for Education, addressed the Board on school and district accountability and weighting of achievement and growth.

Approval of Minutes

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:

VOTED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education approve the minutes of the May 19, 2014 special meeting and the May 20, 2014 regular meeting.

The minutes were approved 9-0-1. Vanessa Calderón-Rosado abstained.

Annual Performance Evaluation of the Commissioner: Report from the Committee on Commissioner's Evaluation

Ms. Noyce, who chaired the Committee on the Commissioner's Performance Evaluation, presented the committee's report and recommendation. She provided an overview of the evaluation criteria, which include: his work as Chief State School Officer; his leadership of the

Department of Elementary and Secondary Education; his management of external relations; his interactions with the Board; and his national leadership. Ms. Noyce said the committee gathered data from various sources, including the Department's actual performance results, the Commissioner's self-assessment, input from the Commissioner's leadership team, and input from leaders of selected education associations. She said the committee concluded that the Commissioner's performance in FY2014 has been outstanding, receiving very high marks, 4.85 in total.

Chair Banta noted the Commissioner's leadership, openness to feedback, collaboration with the field, and high regard nationally. Ms. Calderón-Rosado said she admires the Commissioner's leadership over the years. She said he has the ability to hear dissenting voices, for example, today's discussion on achievement and growth. Ms. Daniels said the Commissioner exhibits grace under fire and always reminds Board members that we are working for the children. Mr. Roach said he is pleased with the Commissioner's response to concerns from the field regarding the pace and array of initiatives. He said he shares those concerns and has been impressed at the way the Commissioner has responded in a positive and constructive way. Mr. Roach added that he admires the Commissioner's commitment to justice and opportunity for students.

Ms. Kaplan said the Board is a healthy mixture of different opinions and views, and the Commissioner's weekly emails and monthly phone calls with members are very helpful. Mr. Morton said he feels well advised at every meeting by the Commissioner and his team, and noted the Commissioner's clear commitment to educational equity. Mr. Brogan said he appreciates the Commissioner's dedication and passion. Vice-Chair Chernow said she is grateful for the open communication with the Commissioner, and that even if she disagreed on a topic, she never felt any pressure to change her position. Secretary Malone said the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education is the highest functioning state board with an independent voice. He said the Commissioner prepares thorough information for the Board and listens to concerns from the field. Secretary Malone encouraged the Board and Commissioner to plan a strategic planning retreat.

Commissioner Chester said he appreciates all the comments and is humbled by the experience. He said he feels an intense sense of mission and an urgency to serve all students well. The Commissioner said he works with a Board that is supportive, credible, provides excellent leadership and policy direction, and asks tough questions. He added that the accomplishments the Board has noted are all a credit to his great staff.

VOTED: **that that Board of Elementary and Secondary Education approve the Commissioner's FY2014 performance rating of "outstanding" as recommended by the Board's committee. Further, that the Board approve a salary increase for the Commissioner of 3 percent, effective July 1, 2014, as well as a mid-cycle review in early 2015.**

The vote was unanimous.

Educator Evaluation: Progress Report on Development and Piloting of Staff/Student Feedback Instruments

Commissioner Chester introduced Malden Superintendent David DeRuosi and Lincoln Superintendent Becky McFall. Claire Abbott, of the Department's Office of Educator Preparation, gave a presentation and explained that during the 2014-2015 school year, teachers will collect student feedback and administrators will collect staff feedback. She said feedback could include surveys, exit slips, written narratives, interviews and focus groups, or other tools.

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In July 2014 the Department will release model student and staff surveys, guidance on the use of student and staff feedback, and recommendations on the use of parent feedback in educator evaluation. She added that the survey data will remain in the schools and districts; the Department will not collect it. Ms. Abbott said the Department is piloting the model surveys with eight districts and one collaborative.

Superintendent DeRuosi said educator evaluation was a major cultural shift in schools. He said Malden offered to be part of this pilot to give educators time to learn and become comfortable with this part of the evaluation process. Superintendent McFall said the Department worked with her district to meet its needs for student surveys to ensure they are a useful and valuable tool. She said the survey is an additional opportunity to know if the district is reaching all students.

In response to Vice-Chair Chernow's question, Ms. Abbott said the Department recommends that surveys be completed during the second half of the year, but districts have flexibility. Superintendent McFall confirmed that there is confidentiality built into the student survey. Commissioner Chester noted that while the Department is providing models, districts are free to use their own surveys if they wish. Secretary Malone commended the superintendents for taking the initiative to have their districts participate in the pilot of the model survey instruments.

Weighting of Achievement and Growth for Accountability Purposes

Secretary Malone read a statement recusing himself from the discussion and vote on this matter, consistent with the conflict of interest law, Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 268A, because the vote may have an indirect financial impact on Boston. He said Governor Patrick has assigned Undersecretary James DiTullio to vote in his absence. Secretary Malone left the meeting at 11:20 a.m. and Mr. DiTullio took his seat for the remainder of the meeting.

Commissioner Chester said the Department and the Board received a lot of input on this topic. He clarified that the discussion is not about the charter school cap lift. He said when he arrived at the Department in 2008, the accountability system did not include a growth measure at all, and he asked the staff to develop one, using student growth percentiles, SGP. Commissioner Chester said the Department spent years reviewing data and created the current system, which uses a four-to-one ratio of 80 percent achievement and 20 percent growth. He said he is recommending a formula with a three-to-one ratio of achievement to growth: 75 percent achievement and 25 percent growth.

Commissioner Chester noted the Board adopted regulations in March 2014 aligning the calculation of the lowest performing 10 percent of districts with a weighting consistent with the Department's approved methodology for the state accountability system. The Board continued the discussion of this issue in April and May. Commissioner Chester stated three foundational principles for the formula: it should incorporate fair and ambitious, but achievable targets; it should assist the Department in directing limited resources to schools that most need them; and it should yield results that represent more signal (results of practical significance) than noise (results of little practical significance). Commissioner Chester said a key consideration for schools is the ability to distinguish among relatively low performing schools, and while it is important to add growth to the system, for fairness, the weight should be heavily on the side of achievement. Deputy Commissioner Wulfson said calculations will be based on 2013 and 2014 data, and the Department cannot predict which districts will fall in or out of the lowest 10 percent.

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In response to Ms. Noyce's question, Rob Curtin, Director of Education Data Services, said there is little movement in and out of the lowest ten percent from year to year. Ms. Chernow said she

appreciates the background information and the work of the Board and Commissioner to look at this topic thoroughly. She said most data show that achievement correlates with family income, and she therefore values growth being added to the formula. Mr. Roach confirmed his support for the new formula, but said he prefers a seventy percent to thirty percent ratio. Mr. DiTullio said the decision around the formula was not rushed and the Commissioner's recommendation is sensible and aligns with the language and intent of the statute. Ms. Kaplan confirmed her support for the recommendation.

VOTED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education adopt a three-to-one ratio of achievement to growth (75 percent achievement, 25 percent growth) for school and district accountability calculations, as presented in the Commissioner's memorandum dated June 20, 2014. Specifically, this three-to-one weighting of achievement and growth indicators shall be used for calculation under the school and district accountability system, per Mass. General Laws chapter 69, sections 1J and 1K, and 603 CMR 2.00 (Regulations on Accountability and Assistance for School Districts and Schools) and for calculations to identify the lowest performing districts for purposes of the charter cap lift, per Mass. General Laws chapter 71, section 89 and 603 CMR 1.00 (Charter School Regulations).

The vote was unanimous.

Update on PARCC

Commissioner Chester said as part of the two-year MCAS-to-PARCC transition plan, the Department asked districts to choose whether they wish to administer MCAS or PARCC in 2015 to students in grades 3-8; districts will report their decisions by the end of June and again in October.

In response to Ms. Kaplan's question, Bob Bickerton said special education accommodations for PARCC testing are similar to those for MCAS, and accommodations such as read-aloud are built into the online items. He said while PARCC does not provide an alternative assessment, the Department plans to upgrade the MCAS alternative (portfolio) assessment to mesh with PARCC standards. In response to Mr. Roach's question, Commissioner Chester updated the Board on the state IT bond bill, which passed the Senate Committee on Bonding and included language on matching funds. Commissioner Chester said the Board will continue discussions and policy decisions on PARCC in the year ahead.

Extension of Current Competency Determination Standard through Class of 2019

Commissioner Chester reminded Board members of their vote in November 2013 to maintain the use of the MCAS tests for students to earn the competency determination for high school graduation at least through the graduating class of 2018. He said students in the graduating class of 2019 will be eighth graders in the coming school year and the Board will not vote on PARCC adoption until these students have begun their ninth-grade year. Commissioner Chester said he is recommending the Board extend the current policy through the class of 2019 so these students will know, before they enter ninth grade, the state standards and assessments required for their high school graduation.

VOTED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, in accordance with its authority under General Laws c. 69, §§ 1B and 1D, and in order to provide fair notice to students and schools, endorses the Commissioner's

recommendation to continue the use of MCAS tests for students to earn the Competency Determination for high school graduation, through the graduating class of 2019.

The vote was unanimous.

Update on Level 5 Schools

Commissioner Chester said a lot of work has been put into moving these four schools forward and implementing the turnaround plans for the upcoming school year. He noted that the statute seeks to expedite the turnaround process, while also allowing time for input and appeals, and that led to some frustration. He asked Rhoda Schneider, General Counsel, to discuss the process with the Board.

Ms. Schneider said the Board, Commissioner, and Department faithfully executed their roles under the statute. She said the tight timelines in the statute create an inherent tension between expeditious action and adequate process. The law directs the Commissioner to create the turnaround plan, with local stakeholder group input, and the Commissioner has to get the plans and receivers moving before the appeal process starts. The Board serves as an appellate body at the end, if the school committee, superintendent, or local union chooses to appeal, and the burden is on the appellant. She said the appeal comes late in the process, which understandably was a challenge for the Board. Ms. Schneider said under the statute, the Board's role is not to design the plan or decide on receivers; rather, the Board has an appellate role and holds the Commissioner accountable for creating and implementing a plan that will lead to rapid improvement for the students in these schools.

Ms. Schneider said the Commissioner and his team have reflected on the process this year to see how it could be improved; one idea is to give the Board more detailed information at each step in the process so members will feel better prepared at the appeal stage. She asked the Board for its feedback. Ms. Noyce suggested a Board member could attend local stakeholder group meetings as an observer. Vice-Chair Chernow said the local stakeholder group process should be participatory and inclusive; some members of the local groups were disappointed with the process and felt that their views were not heard. The Vice-Chair added that it is helpful to clarify the Board's appellate role, and noted that the hearings on June 9 were smoother than the first one.

Mr. Morton agreed that the process and structure were clearer in the latter hearings. He said the Board's role is to hear objections to the plan and decide, not to debate operational details. He recommended the Commissioner take into consideration the concerns around local stakeholder group input. Mr. Roach commented that the timelines in the statute are daunting, and suggested it would be useful to build in more time for local input at the front end, if possible.

Update on FY2015 State Education Budget

Chief Financial Officer Bill Bell updated the Board on the state budget process. He said the legislative conference committee should release its report this week. Mr. DiTullio reminded Board members that the Legislature's formal sessions end on July 31, and several important bills are still awaiting action.

Delegation of Authority to Commissioner to Take Necessary Action between Board Meetings

VOTED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education authorize the Commissioner, in accordance with General Laws c. 15, § 1F, paragraph 3, to act on behalf of the Board in approving any matters that are not otherwise covered by the Board's previous delegations of authority and that require Board action between June 24, 2014 and the next regular meeting of the Board in September 2014; provided that the Commissioner shall notify Board members in advance of any such action and shall report to the Board on any matters that have been so approved.

The vote was unanimous.

Schedule for Regular Board meetings through June 2015

VOTED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education approve the schedule of regular meetings through June 2015, as presented by the Commissioner.

The motion was approved 9-0-1. Daniel Brogan abstained.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:

VOTED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education adjourn the meeting at 12:55 pm, subject to the call of the chair.

The vote was unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,
Mitchell D. Chester
Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education
and Secretary to the Board

**Minutes of the Regular Meeting
of the Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education**

Tuesday, September 23, 2014

Monday, September 20, 2014

8:30 a.m. – 12:55 p.m.

**Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
75 Pleasant Street, Malden, MA**

Members of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education Present:

Margaret McKenna, Chair, Boston
Harneen Chernow, Vice-Chair, Jamaica Plain
Katherine Craven, Brookline
Karen Daniels, Milton
Matthew Malone, Secretary of Education, Roslindale
James Morton, Springfield
Pendred Noyce, Boston
David Roach, Millbury
Mary Ann Stewart, Lexington
Donald Willyard, Chair, Student Advisory Council, Revere

Mitchell D. Chester, Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education, Secretary to the Board

Member of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education Absent:
Vanessa Calderón-Rosado, Milton

Chair McKenna called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m.

Secretary Malone introduced the members of the Board recently appointed by the Governor: Mary Ann Stewart, Katherine Craven, and Chair Margaret McKenna; and Donald Willyard, the elected Chair of the State Student Advisory Council. He thanked the Board for its outstanding leadership.

Comments from the Chair

Chair McKenna welcomed Board members to the meeting and the start of the new school year. She said she is delighted to be on the Board and shares the commitment to providing an equal opportunity for all students.

Comments from the Commissioner

Commissioner Chester welcomed new and continuing Board members. He reported on his two visits to the Lawrence schools this month, one with American Federation of Teachers President Randi Weingarten and the other with U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan and Chair McKenna. Commissioner Chester informed the Board about the curriculum and instruction

summit that the Department is hosting for school teams in October, upcoming school visits, and an anticipated report from the State Auditor on the charter school waitlist. He said the Department is working with the Rennie Center on a study of the uses of student assessments. The commissioner informed the Board that the Department has applied for an extension of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) waiver for Massachusetts. Commissioner Chester said the U.S. Department of Education has a concern with allowing districts to choose to administer either PARCC or MCAS assessments in 2015 as part of our two-year try-out of PARCC. He also informed the Board that the Department will release the list of districts in the lowest 10% of statewide student performance shortly.

Comments from the Secretary

Secretary Malone updated the Board on his school visits around the Commonwealth. He informed the Board of the Governor's Task Force Report on School Safety and Security. Secretary Malone said assistance teams and small state grants are available for school districts to implement the recommendations in the report. The secretary said his major areas of focus through December are: assessment, alternative education, early education, vocational-technical education, and transition planning for the new administration.

Comments from the Public

1. Yvonne Powell, Dearborn School volunteer, Greater Boston Interfaith Organization, and Roxbury Presbyterian Church, addressed the Board on the Dearborn School (Boston).
2. Ann O'Halloran, President of Citizens for Public Schools, addressed the Board on the Dearborn School (Boston).
3. Elaine Miller, retired teacher, addressed the Board on the Dearborn School (Boston).
4. James Major, Executive Director, Massachusetts Association of 766 Approved Private Schools, addressed the Board on the proposed amendments to Regulations on Restraint and Seclusion.
5. Gerry Mroz, parent, addressed the Board on gifted and talented education and regionalization.

Approval of Minutes

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:

VOTED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education approve the minutes of the June 9, 2014 Special Meeting, June 23, 2014 Special Meeting, and June 24, 2014 Regular Meeting.

The vote was unanimous.

2013-2014 Achievement and Accountability Overview

Chair McKenna gave an overview of the previous evening's special meeting. She expressed concern about over-use of testing, stating that in Boston, third graders spend 20-25 days on testing, pre-testing, and practicing. She said the Board needs to understand who is mandating

which tests and how schools are using the results. Chair McKenna also noted concerns about the impact of student mobility. Commissioner Chester said these issues are important. He added that schools should be less focused on test preparation and more focused on developing strong reading and mathematics programs. The commissioner said PARCC is less likely to cause schools to engage in narrow test preparation because of the emphasis on thinking and applying knowledge.

Commissioner Chester said the latest MCAS results, which the Board reviewed last night, show that a growing number of students are succeeding, although more progress is needed. The commissioner said the promising results in Lawrence and Revere demonstrate that poverty does not doom students to low achievement. He noted that Boston's Burke High School emerged from Level 4, along with three other schools, but the schools remaining in and newly designated as Level 4 are troubling. Commissioner Chester said he is working with local officials in Boston and Springfield to develop aggressive turnaround plans for schools that have been stuck, but he will maintain discretion to intervene via Level 5 if necessary.

Mr. Morton asked how information on successful turnaround work is disseminated. Commissioner Chester said the Department is working on this. Vice-Chair Chernow said testing overload is commonly felt across the state. She asked for more information on the relationship between districts and educational management organizations. Ms. Noyce thanked the commissioner for informing the Board early on about the details of the potential Level 5 schools.

Mr. Willyard said his school recently spent a week on practice testing. Ms. Craven said the 1993 Education Reform Act infused significant new funding in public schools in return for standards, assessment, and accountability. She noted vocational-technical schools with high results and two commended Level 1 schools in Boston. Ms. Noyce reminded members that education pre-MCAS was not uniformly excellent and creative for all students. She said testing done right is learning, and what is unfair is not educating students. Ms. Daniels said PARCC has the potential to remedy this problem with enhanced items, real world applications of knowledge, critical thinking skills, and timely information.

Chair McKenna expressed concerns about early literacy and flat third grade reading results. She suggested the Board hold a special meeting on this topic. Secretary Malone added that the Board should connect with the Early Literacy Commission and the Board of Early Education and Care.

Update on PARCC

Commissioner Chester reminded Board members of the two-year "test drive" of PARCC that the Board endorsed in November 2013. He said he recently attended a TeachPlus professional development session with 250 educators focused on PARCC items. Commissioner Chester said as of the most recent decision data, 60% of districts have chosen PARCC for 2015 and 40% have chosen MCAS. Bob Bickerton gave a presentation. He noted that MCAS high school tests continue to be used for the competency determination.

In response to Mr. Willyard's question, Mr. Bickerton said 75% of students who participated in the PARCC field test in the spring of 2014 finished in the allotted time and 98% finished in the allowed time-and-a-half. In response to Ms. Noyce's questions, Commissioner Chester said all

students and parents will receive student results from the spring 2015 administration on either test, and PARCC districts will be held harmless for accountability purposes. Commissioner Chester said he would ask these kinds of questions to judge the value of the PARCC assessments: Is this assessment doing a good job measuring the new frameworks and learning? Do students find it engaging and doable? Are the expectations as strong as or stronger than MCAS? What is the feedback from districts? Is the assessment providing more accurate information for students and parents about how students are doing in relation to college expectations?

Vice-Chair Chernow said she would like more information on the national picture on PARCC. Mr. Roach expressed concern about students' unequal access to technology. Deputy Commissioner Wulfson said the Department shares that concern, and the Massachusetts IT bond bill and Federal Communications Commission funds will assist districts in expanding students' access to technology. Mr. Wulfson said the main use of technology is not for assessment, but for instruction. Commissioner Chester said he will not ask the Board to decide on PARCC until we have sufficient data to make the decision. In response to Chair McKenna's question about the multi-state consortium, Commissioner Chester said Massachusetts has been very involved; he chairs the governing board and Higher Education Commissioner Richard Freeland chairs the higher education PARCC group. Chief Financial Officer Bill Bell said the operational contract between the consortium states and Pearson is close to final.

Status Report on Current Level 5 Schools

Commissioner Chester said this report is his first monthly update on the four Level 5 schools, and includes a more detailed quarterly report. Commissioner Chester introduced Deputy Commissioner Alan Ingram and Senior Associate Commissioner Russell Johnston. Dr. Ingram reminded Board members of the decision to place four schools into Level 5 status last fall - Dever Elementary School and Holland Elementary School in Boston, Parker Elementary School in New Bedford, and Morgan Full Service Community School in Holyoke. He said this is an unprecedented opportunity to improve outcomes for students.

Mr. Johnston said the turnaround work has included hiring teachers and other school staff who are committed to the mission; creating school structures to ensure collaborative planning and learning time; and providing leadership opportunities for staff. Mr. Johnston said each school provided two to four weeks of summer professional development for staff. He said all schools developed curriculum guides, defined the use of instructional time, created schedules that protect instructional time, and established additional supports for struggling students. Mr. Johnston said the schools realize the importance of family and community engagement. As part of the engagement work, schools sent mailings, made phone calls and home visits, hosted family orientation sessions, and created new partnerships with community organizations. Mr. Johnston added that facilities were updated and reorganized to meet the needs of students and teachers.

Mr. Roach commented that school culture and supports for teachers were a large part of the discussion at the Level 5 appeal hearings. Mr. Johnston responded that, in addition to tasks outlined in the turnaround plan, students also had their own orientation before school to set expectations and familiarize them with the schools. Vice-Chair Chernow asked for more information about teacher turnover and demographics, experience levels, and school site

councils. In response to Ms. Stewart's question, Mr. Johnston said the math fellows are college graduates who are trained and paid as tutors. Commissioner Chester said the operators have experience engaging with parents and the community and use deliberate strategies to do so. Ms. Noyce asked for more information about preschool enrollment.

Proposed Amendments to Regulations on Restraint and Seclusion, 603 CMR 18 and 603 CMR 46

Commissioner Chester said the discussion and vote today would launch a public comment period, after which the regulations would come back to the Board for consideration for final adoption. He said the Department is proposing to update the current regulations to align with national best practices and policy recommendations. Commissioner Chester said in drafting the proposed amendments, Department staff consulted informally with the Disability Law Center, Department of Early Education and Care, Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents, Massachusetts Administrators of Special Education, Massachusetts Urban Special Education Directors, Massachusetts Association of Approved Private Schools, Massachusetts Secondary School Administrators Association, Massachusetts Elementary School Principals Association, and representatives from other state agencies.

Marty Mitnacht, State Director of Special Education, said the regulations apply to all students, not just special education students. She said 603 CMR 46 applies to all schools, and 603 CMR 18 applies to residential schools. Mr. DiTullio said the Department did an excellent job of seeking stakeholder input even before the public comment period. He said the current regulations need revision. Mr. Morton requested more information on the types of restraints that schools use. Ms. Noyce said she would like more information about the students who are in private special education day and residential programs. Ms. Craven cautioned that the regulations should not be so restrictive that schools resort to calling police when a student needs to be restrained.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:

VOTED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, in accordance with M.G.L. c. 69, § 1B, and c. 71, § 37G, hereby authorize the Commissioner to proceed in accordance with the Administrative Procedure Act, G.L. c.30A, § 3, to solicit public comment on the proposed amendments to the Physical Restraint Regulations (603 CMR 46) and conforming amendments to the Program and Safety Standards for Approved Public or Private Day and Residential Special Education School Programs, 603 CMR 18.

The vote was unanimous.

Presentation on Career and Vocational-Technical Education

Commissioner Chester said today's presentation is designed to provide an overview of career/vocational technical education programs around the state. He said overall, Massachusetts has strong programs and many are oversubscribed. The commissioner added that he would present proposed amendments to the regulations later in the fall. Commissioner Chester introduced: Judith L. Klimkiewicz, Superintendent of Nashoba Valley Vocational Technical High School;

Michael Fitzpatrick, Superintendent of Blackstone Valley Vocational Technical High School; Tom Hickey, President of the Massachusetts Association of Vocational Administrators (MAVA); and David Ferriera, Executive Director of MAVA.

Patricia Gregson, the Department's Associate Commissioner of Vocational, Workforce, and College Readiness, gave a presentation on career/vocational technical education in Massachusetts, including the criteria for Chapter 74 state approved programs and non-Chapter 74 programs, data on number and types of schools, and student enrollment and outcome data. She said vocational technical programs are in high demand, and over 4,500 students are on waitlists for regional vocational schools.

Mr. Fitzpatrick presented on the work of Blackstone Valley. He said successful vocational programs in Massachusetts are recognized nationally. Ms. Klimkiewicz presented on the work of Nashoba Valley's students and educators. She said students graduate from these programs with knowledge and skills for employment and a successful career. Thomas Hickey of MAVA presented on vocational programs and closing the skills gap.

In response to Ms. Noyce's question, Mr. Fitzpatrick said the success of vocational schools can be attributed to integrated programs, applied learning, and adaptation to the current economy. Ms. Klimkiewicz said vocational schools do not "cream" students, noting that 30 percent of Nashoba's students are in special education. Commissioner Chester said the topic of admissions and access to vocational technical schools has been controversial, and he plans to bring recommendations to this Board this fall. Vice-Chair Chernow expressed concerns about the application process and the role of gender in program selection. Ms. Craven cited Worcester Vocational Technical High School as a model for successful school turnaround with a dynamic advisory board. Mr. Roach and Chair McKenna suggested the Board discuss the successes and challenges that districts and vocational schools have working with community colleges.

Commissioner Chester said later this fall the Board will discuss proposed changes to the vocational-technical education regulations.

Report on Plans for Foundation Budget Review Commission

Commissioner Chester said the Legislature established the Foundation Budget Review Commission through a provision in the FY2015 state budget. The commission is charged with reviewing the assumptions and factors used to set annual minimum spending levels and state aid allotments for every school district in the Commonwealth. Commissioner Chester said in Massachusetts \$15 billion in funding from all sources – local, state, federal, and outside funding – is spent annually on K-12 education, averaging to about \$15,000 per student. Deputy Commissioner Wulfson reminded the Board that the Department issued a report on the school finance system in 2013, <http://www.doe.mass.edu/research/reports/2013/07FinancingSystem.pdf>. Mr. Wulfson said the Chapter 70 foundation budget formula grew out of the 1993 Education Reform Act and the landmark *McDuffy* decision of the Supreme Judicial Court. The Chapter 70 formula sets a foundation budget for each district based on student needs and sets required state and local shares, using a progressive formula. Mr. Wulfson said the formula has not kept up with the costs of technology and health insurance, and the Commissioner is interested in encouraging use of best practices with any new funding.

Process and Timelines for FY2016 Budget

Bill Bell, Chief Financial Officer, presented the budget process and cycle to Board members. He said since this is an election year, the current Governor will not present a budget for fiscal year 2016. Mr. Bell said the Board establishes priorities for the K-12 education budget, which allows the Commissioner to advocate for those priorities. Chair McKenna appointed Mr. Roach as the chair of the budget committee and appointed Karen Daniels, Katherine Craven, and Mary Ann Stewart to the committee, on which Chair McKenna also serves. Commissioner Chester said the Board will vote on its final FY2016 budget recommendations at the November meeting.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:

VOTED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education adjourn the meeting at 12:55 p.m., subject to the call of the chair.

The vote was unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,
Mitchell D. Chester
Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education
and Secretary to the Board

**Minutes of the Regular Meeting
of the Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education**

Tuesday, October 21, 2014

8:30 a.m. – 12:55 p.m.

**Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
75 Pleasant Street, Malden, MA**

Members of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education Present:

Margaret McKenna, Chair, Boston

Harneen Chernow, Vice-Chair, Jamaica Plain

Vanessa Calderón-Rosado, Milton

Katherine Craven, Brookline

Karen Daniels, Milton

Matthew Malone, Secretary of Education, by James DiTullio, Designee

Pendred Noyce, Boston

David Roach, Millbury

Mary Ann Stewart, Lexington

Donald Willyard, Chair, Student Advisory Council, Revere

Mitchell D. Chester, Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education, Secretary to the Board

Member of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education Absent:

James Morton, Springfield

Chair McKenna called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m.

Comments from the Chair

Chair McKenna welcomed members of the Board and the public. She reported on the briefing session that the Board had on Monday afternoon, October 20, on charter schools and the Board's authorizing role. Chair McKenna recapped the Board's special meeting on Monday evening, October 20, which focused on early literacy, particularly statewide achievement results, summer learning loss, and intervention strategies. She said the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education will continue its focus on early literacy by scheduling a special joint meeting with the Board of Early Education and Care. Chair McKenna noted that she recently spoke at the annual conference of the National Association of State Boards of Education.

Chair McKenna asked Mary Ann Stewart to report on her recent visits to private special education schools. Ms. Stewart visited the New England Center for Children and Nashoba Learning Group and viewed their use of restraint and seclusion. Chair McKenna said the Board would hold a hearing in the next few weeks on the proposed amendments to the restraint regulations. The Chair also noted that some people have come to today's meeting to speak on charter school applicants' waiver requests, although the Board will not be taking action on that matter today. She said the Board would schedule a separate forum to hear from the public on the waiver requests.

Comments from the Commissioner

Commissioner Chester informed members of the recent National Milken Educator award that went to Anthony Petrelis, a teacher at John J. McGlynn Elementary School in Medford. He noted that the U.S. Department of Education (USED) has approved the flexibility waiver extension for Massachusetts under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, which allows Massachusetts to continue to use its updated school and district accountability system.

Commissioner Chester said while USED did not approve the plan for allowing districts to choose either MCAS or PARCC in FY2015, there is no penalty, as the Board will make its decision on a single assessment system in time for FY2016. He reminded the Board of the Department's upcoming statewide curriculum and instruction summit. The commissioner reported on the October 17 conference he attended on opportunity, equity, and outcomes at the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston.

Commissioner Chester updated the Board on the charter school application process and the impact of the calculation of the lowest ten percent of districts, particularly on the charter applicant groups from Brockton and Fitchburg. He said the Board followed an open process and made appropriate decisions, but these two applications are caught in a collision of various requirements. Commissioner Chester said the Board and Department will take the time necessary to review the waiver requests, the comments, and the options under the law, and then he will make a recommendation to the Board.

Comments from the Secretary

Mr. DiTullio said the Board's special meeting on early literacy was a fruitful discussion. Noting the importance of interagency collaboration on early literacy, he commended the plan for a joint ESE-EEC board meeting. He said Governor Patrick is giving his final speech on education this week at Bunker Hill Community College. Mr. DiTullio said the executive office is focused on creating a seamless transition for the incoming governor.

Comments from the Public

1. Chris Martes, CEO & President, Strategies for Children, addressed the Board on early literacy.
2. Yvonne Powell, representative of the local stakeholders group, addressed the Board on the Dearborn School, Boston.
3. Carlos Rojas Álvarez, representative of the Boston Student Advisory Council and Youth on Board, addressed the Board on Level 5 schools.
4. Tracy O'Connell Novick, Worcester School Committee Member, addressed the Board on accountability.
5. Matt Holzer, Headmaster of Boston Green Academy Horace Mann Charter School, addressed the Board on the school's probation.
6. Carl Tillona, Principal of the Greenfield Virtual School, addressed the Board on the school's probation.
7. Barbara Madeloni, President of the Massachusetts Teachers Association, addressed the Board on charter schools.
8. Kathleen Smith, Superintendent, Brockton Public Schools, addressed the Board on charter schools.

9. Andre Ravenelle, Superintendent, Fitchburg Public Schools, addressed the Board on charter schools.
10. Beth Anderson, MA Public Charter School Association, addressed the Board on charter schools.
11. Michael Sullivan, representative of the New Heights Charter School of Brockton founding group, addressed the Board on charter schools.
12. Jennifer Jones, representative of the Academy for the Whole Child Charter School founding group, addressed the Board on charter schools.

Approval of Minutes

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:

VOTED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education approve the minutes of the September 19, 2014 Special Meeting and September 20, 2014 Regular Meeting.

The vote was unanimous.

Election of Vice-Chair

Harneen Chernow nominated David Roach to serve as vice-chair to the Board. Ms. Chernow said Mr. Roach has outstanding knowledge of both education policy and school district administration.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:

VOTED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education elect David Roach to serve as Vice-Chair of the Board, in accordance with Article I of the By-Laws.

The vote was 9-0-1. David Roach abstained.

Board of Elementary and Secondary Education FY16 Budget Proposal and Report from the Board's Budget Committee

David Roach, chair of the budget committee, said the committee had a preliminary discussion on establishing budget priorities, such as school and district turnaround, early literacy, educator evaluation, and curriculum. He said the findings of the Foundation Budget Review Commission will likely have an impact on the budget. Commissioner Chester said the Federal Reserve Bank conference affirmed the correlation between education and future success and income: education is the key to opportunity. He said while it is appropriate for local education agencies to manage and direct local schools, the *McDuffy* and *Hancock* decisions of the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court made it clear that the Commonwealth, through its executive and legislative officials, has a fundamental constitutional duty to educate all children to a high standard. Commissioner Chester noted that Department capacity is a continuing challenge; of the \$5 billion in state funds appropriated for K-12 education each year, less than 0.5% goes to the Department to fulfill our responsibilities.

Chair McKenna said the Board's budget should reflect its priorities, especially initiatives vital to closing the achievement gap. Deputy Commissioner Wulfson reminded the Board that federal Race to the Top funding is phasing out this year. Ms. Chernow said during her time on the Board she has seen the contraction of state funding while the Department is expected to play an increased role. Ms. Noyce asked about per pupil expenditures. Mr. Wulfson said the statewide average per pupil expenditure is about \$14,000, though generally higher in cities and affluent suburbs. He said districts receive additional funds for low-income students and English language learners through Chapter 70. He added that the state does not currently have a way to track those funds to ensure they are being spent effectively. The Commissioner noted districts have complete discretion in how they spend Chapter 70 funds. In response to a question, Deputy Commissioner Wulfson said over half the staff of the Department is federally funded. Mr. Roach said the state budget must provide adequate funding to protect long term investments and progress in education.

Update on Level 5 Schools

Commissioner Chester said this month's update on Level 5 schools provides information about visits that have been scheduled with the four schools; the Level 5 Quarterly Progress Monitoring plan; and School Site Council/Parent Advisory Council updates. He said he visited the Parker Elementary School and New Bedford High School, and is very encouraged by the work and perspectives of parents and students. Deputy Commissioner Alan Ingram updated the Board on the Dearborn Middle School in Boston, which is a Level 4 school. He said the Department has been working with the Boston Public Schools since August to set expectations and assist in the turnaround planning. Ms. Chernow commented on staff turnover at Level 5 schools. Ms. Noyce noted that the Board does not function as the school board for the Level 5 schools; staffing and building level decisions are the responsibility of the receiver.

Update on PARCC

Deputy Commissioner Wulfson made a presentation on PARCC including an overview of the organizational structure for the PARCC consortium. He said Commissioner Chester chairs the PARCC governing board, and our staff and Massachusetts educators are deeply engaged in the process. Commissioner Chester said Massachusetts state leadership set a high bar when joining the multi-state PARCC consortium. He said 13 states are currently active members in the consortium, with a couple of states having dropped out due to political and budgetary conditions in their states. Mr. Wulfson reviewed the final data on districts choosing either PARCC or MCAS for spring 2015 administration. He updated the Board on technology pilot funding through the IT Bond Bill and assistance for municipalities through MassIT. Mr. DiTullio said the Commonwealth is promoting school technology upgrades for instruction, not just for assessment. Liz Davis, Associate Commissioner of Assessment, informed Board members that a PARCC training session in Burlington will be provided for over 500 educators.

Chris Malone, Assistant Superintendent of Revere Public Schools, presented to the Board on Revere's experience piloting PARCC and their use of technology in the classroom. He said students are very positive about the online experience for instruction as well as assessment. Mr. Malone thanked the Department for its assistance in resolving some problems with the PARCC field test, concerning uploading student data, the mathematics equation editor, and Pearson customer service. Mr. Willyard said he has heard from students who are enthusiastic about Revere's work to bring technology into their classrooms. Chair McKenna asked about the Department's survey of testing in Massachusetts districts. Mr. Wulfson said the initial

information is in the packet distributed to the Board at this meeting, with a more detailed report expected in February.

Amendments to Regulations on Educator Licensure and Preparation Program Approval (603 CMR 7) and Educator License Renewal (603 CMR 44): Requirements for Teachers of Deaf/Hard of Hearing Students

Commissioner Chester said the Board is taking final action today on regulations that went out for public comment in February. He pointed out the summary of comments and the Department's response on various issues. He noted that the Department worked with various disability groups and educator preparation programs on the regulations. Mr. DiTullio said these regulations are a good example of how the Department reviews and takes into account all the public comments, and the final regulations are improved as a result of the process.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:

VOTED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, in accordance with M.G.L. c. 69, § 1B, and c. 71, § 38G, and having solicited and reviewed public comment in accordance with the Administrative Procedure Act, G.L. c.30A, § 3, hereby adopt the amendments to the Regulations on Educator Licensure and Preparation Program Approval (603 CMR 7) and Educator License Renewal (603 CMR 44), as presented by the Commissioner. The amendments relate to the requirements for Teachers of Deaf/Hard of Hearing Students.

The vote was unanimous.

Boston Green Academy Horace Mann Charter School: Probation Recommendation

Mr. DiTullio presented Chair McKenna with a recusal letter from Secretary Malone (the letter is attached to these minutes). Secretary Malone has recused himself from this matter due to a possible conflict of interest as an applicant for the position of Boston superintendent of schools. Mr. DiTullio said the Governor has assigned this particular matter to him.

Commissioner Chester presented an overview of the concerns about the school, including financial viability, failure to follow regulatory requirements, and academic progress. He said the Department and Board want to signal concerns early, in this case one year before the possible renewal of the charter, so the school can address the problems in timely fashion.

Chair McKenna commended the school and its headmaster for their openness and willingness to move forward and focus on improvement. Ms. Chernow asked if this school is part of the district's turnaround strategy. Associate Commissioner Cliff Chuang said the school was started as an improvement effort, and 40% of the students are continuing to attend the school. He clarified that as a Horace Mann charter school, it is still being measured against the statewide performance criteria.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:

VOTED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, in accordance with General Laws chapter 71, section 89, and 603 CMR 1.12(2), hereby places the Boston Green Academy Horace Mann Charter School (BGA) on probation

and directs the school to meet the following terms of probation, as recommended by the Commissioner:

1. Beginning in October of 2014 and until further notice, BGA must submit to the Department, at charterschools@doe.mass.edu, board meeting agendas, materials, and minutes prior to each board meeting at the same time that these items are sent to the school's board members. Additionally, if board materials do not already include this information, the school must also submit monthly financial statements.
2. By December 31, 2014, the school's board of trustees must have completed a comprehensive self-evaluation of its own capacity and must have recruited additional board members with needed expertise, as identified by the board of trustees and the Department.
3. By December 31, 2014, the school must establish an escrow account in an amount determined by the Department in consultation with the school to pay for any potential closing, legal, and audit expenses associated with closure, should that occur.
4. By February 28, 2015, the school's board of trustees must engage in training conducted by an external consultant, acceptable to and approved in advance by the Department, on the roles and responsibilities of a board of trustees for a charter school.
5. By February 28, 2015, all members of the board of trustees of BGA will complete the series of six trainings offered online by the Office of the Attorney General regarding the Open Meeting Law. All board members will sign the required certificate stating that they have received, read, and viewed the following materials: the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A, §§ 18-25; regulations promulgated by the Attorney General under G.L. c. 30A, § 25; and educational materials available from the Attorney General explaining the Open Meeting Law and its application.
6. By November 1, 2015, as documented by the school's FY15 independent financial audit, the school must remedy all material weaknesses and deficiencies identified in the FY13 financial audit and any subsequent findings in the school's audit for FY14. The school must have an unqualified opinion on its FY15 audit without any identified material weaknesses.
7. By December 31, 2015, the school must demonstrate that it is an academic success through evidence of significant academic improvement in mathematics and English language arts.
8. The school will submit all documentation required by the Department in accordance with deadlines established by the Department for the remainder of the school's charter term including, but not limited to, documents for approval and appointment of new board members; financial disclosures of board members; the school's annual financial audit; the school's application to renew its charter, if desired; the school's annual report and end of year financial report; and all required and accompanying documentation.

In addition to meeting the terms of probation, Boston Green Academy Horace Mann Charter School, like all charter schools, must comply with the terms of its charter. The Commissioner shall review and report to the Board on the success or lack of success of Boston Green Academy Horace Mann Charter School in meeting the terms of probation and its charter and, based

upon his review, shall recommend such further action as he deems appropriate.

The vote was unanimous.

Greenfield Commonwealth Virtual School: Probation Recommendation

Commissioner Chester presented an overview. He said in 2010, the Massachusetts Virtual Academy (MAVA) began operations as a virtual innovation school, approved by the Greenfield Public Schools. The commissioner said in 2013, Governor Patrick signed the virtual school law authorizing the Board to adopt regulations and, through the Department, to oversee the establishment and operation of virtual schools. Commissioner Chester said the new statute was responsive to the position the Board adopted in 2011: that there should be a stronger oversight and consumer protection role for the state than the one provided by the innovation school statute. The commissioner noted that the 2013 legislation carved out a continuation for MAVA, now called Greenfield Commonwealth Virtual School (GCVS), with additional oversight.

Associate Commissioner Cliff Chuang said the recommendation of probation is based upon concerns regarding the academic performance and governance of the virtual school. He said the Board attached conditions to GCVS's virtual school certificate when it was granted, and the school has not met two conditions. The commissioner is recommending probation with additional conditions.

Ms. Noyce noted the additional conditions focus on English language arts (ELA) and mathematics. She said it would be an unfortunate unintended consequence if the school's science achievement slipped due to a focus on only ELA and mathematics, and suggested the virtual school needs to align its curriculum in all subjects. Ms. Calderón-Rosado asked about access and equity with regard to special education students and English language learners. She suggested adding a condition regarding identifying and serving English language learners and special education students, as required by law. Mr. Roach said there have been concerns about the virtual school for some time, and he hopes the school will benefit from the oversight and address the concerns.

Chair McKenna proposed that the main motion as presented in the Board book be amended to include a requirement that the school align its curriculum in all subjects, and to add a condition relating to identifying and serving English language learners and special education students, as required by law.

The main motion was duly made and seconded.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:

VOTED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education amend the main motion, as follows:

- add to the condition relating to alignment of curriculum, the words "all subjects in" so that it reads, "provide evidence that it has completed the alignment of its curriculum to all subjects in the Massachusetts curriculum frameworks" and
- add a new condition that requires GCVS to provide evidence that it has fully implemented a system to identify and serve English language

learners and special education students that is consistent with all applicable federal and state laws and regulations.

The vote was unanimous. The Board then voted on the motion as amended.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:

VOTED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, in accordance with General Laws chapter 71, section 94, and 603 CMR 52.12(2), hereby places the Massachusetts Virtual Academy at Greenfield Commonwealth Virtual School (GCVS) on probation and directs the school to meet the following terms of probation, as recommended by the Commissioner and amended by the Board:

1. By October 31, 2014, GCVS will submit to the Department a final draft of a contract with K12, Inc., that addresses all issues already communicated to GCVS by the Department, for approval by the Commissioner.
2. By December 31, 2014, GCVS will provide evidence that it has fully implemented a system to identify and serve English language learners and special education students that is consistent with all applicable federal and state laws and regulations.
3. By December 31, 2014, GCVS will provide evidence that it has completed the alignment of its curriculum to all subjects in the Massachusetts curriculum frameworks: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/current.html>.
4. By December 31, 2014, GCVS will submit to the Department a comprehensive evaluation of the school's mathematics and English language arts programs and of the school's instructional practices, such evaluation to be conducted by one or more external consultants acceptable to the Department.
5. By January 31, 2015, GCVS will submit an action plan to the Department for approval that specifies strategies to improve mathematics and English language arts performance. The plan must address how the school will utilize and support instructional staff to implement the plan. The plan must include a timetable for the implementation of actions, must set deadlines for the completion of key tasks, and must set clear and specific implementation benchmarks to allow the GCVS board of trustees and the Department to monitor implementation.
6. By December 31, 2015, GCVS must demonstrate that it is an academic success through evidence of significant academic improvement in mathematics and English language arts.
7. Beginning immediately and until further notice, GCVS must submit to the Department, at jgwatkin@doe.mass.edu or 75 Pleasant St., Malden, MA, 02148, board meeting agendas and materials, prior to each board meeting at the same time that these items are sent to GCVS board members. Further, GCVS must submit to the Department the minutes of these proceedings as soon as the GCVS board approves them. The Department reserves the right to require the submission of additional information, such as quarterly or monthly financial statements, if board materials do not already include this information, and the school must provide such additional information within two business days.

In addition to meeting the terms of probation, the Massachusetts Virtual Academy at Greenfield Commonwealth Virtual School must also comply

with the terms of its certificate. The Commissioner shall review and report to the Board on the success or lack of success of Massachusetts Virtual Academy at Greenfield Commonwealth Virtual School in meeting the terms of probation and its certificate and, based upon his review, shall recommend such further action as he deems appropriate.

The vote was unanimous.

KIPP Academy Lynn Charter School: Removal of Conditions

Commissioner Chester presented an overview, noting that this matter was brought to the full Board at the request of a member. He said the conditions that had been imposed on the school pertained to compliance and governance issues that surfaced during the school's renewal process. He recommends that the Board remove the conditions placed on KIPP Lynn's charter because the school has met all of the conditions imposed.

Ms. Chernow said the school was originally chartered to provide students with 220 school days per year and now offers 185 days, which seems to be a significant change. Associate Commissioner Cliff Chuang said that is what the amendment process is for; the design of the school year has evolved although the school has a longer instructional day. He said the charter amendment process allows for a certain level of change to be approved by the Commissioner, and more significant changes are brought to the Board. Mr. Chuang said the school has an extended instructional day and outstanding results for students. Commissioner Chester noted that the school provides 1375 hours of structured learning time to its students each school year, compared to 990 hours for most traditional public secondary schools. Chair McKenna requested a further discussion on the charter amendment process and delegations.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:

VOTED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, in accordance with General Laws chapter 71, section 89, and 603 CMR 1.00, hereby removes the conditions from the charter of the KIPP Academy Lynn Charter School because the school has met the conditions imposed in March 2014.

KIPP Academy Lynn Charter School shall be operated in accordance with the provisions of General Laws chapter 71, section 89, and 603 CMR 1.00 and all other applicable state and federal laws and regulations and such additional conditions as the Commissioner may from time to time establish, all of which shall be deemed conditions of the charter.

The vote was 9-0-1. Harneen Chernow abstained.

Timeline and Process for Educator Licensure Policy Review

Commissioner Chester said the Department is in the very early stages of soliciting feedback from the field on initiatives to upgrade our licensure requirements and the connections to educator preparation programs. He said the Board has responsibility to establish standards for certifying (licensing) educators, principles of educator evaluation, and guidelines for educator preparation programs. He said the Massachusetts system seeks to promote growth and development for

educators, place student learning at the center, recognize excellence in teaching and leading, and set a high standard for professional teaching.

Associate Commissioner Heather Peske said the Department engaged with over 300 educators and 25 focus groups on the topic of licensure redesign. She said the next step in the process is holding public forums for educators to weigh in on the draft proposals. Ms. Peske outlined the upcoming engagement opportunities.

Ms. Chernow said the draft policy options provided in the memorandum to the Board look very different from the draft policy options recently given to the field. She said the proposals include linking educator evaluation to licensure decisions, which is a loaded concept in light of a new evaluation system, a new assessment system, and district-determined measures. Ms. Noyce said the system should be designed to produce a diverse and well qualified educator workforce. Chair McKenna said she would not want to see licensure redesign place undue burdens on educator preparation programs. She said a balance must be struck between entry requirements into the field and sufficient experience to have an impact on students, and she would not favor a system that places teachers in a classroom based solely on a test. She added that the system should enable the identification of distinguished or superior teachers. Chair McKenna said the licensure system should not replace the district's obligation to hire, evaluate, and, when necessary, fire their personnel. Mr. Roach said he has heard concerns from the field about the draft policies. He encouraged the Department and Board to be respectful of the viewpoints of educators and all types of preparation programs. Commissioner Chester said he will keep the Board posted about this initiative.

Procedures for Superintendency Unions under Mass. Gen. Laws c. 71, s. 61; Authorization to Commissioner

Commissioner Chester said superintendency unions are cooperative arrangements between two or more school committees, typically in small towns, to share the services of a superintendent of schools and central office staff, while allowing each town to keep its own school committee and school buildings. There are currently 49 superintendency unions in the Commonwealth. The Commissioner said the guidelines for the superintendency unions have not been updated since 1983 and he is asking the Board to delegate to the Commissioner the authority to issue and update guidelines and administrative procedures on the formation, reorganization, or dissolution of superintendency unions.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:

VOTED: **that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education authorize the Commissioner, in accordance with General Laws c. 15, § 1F, paragraph 3, to act on behalf of the Board in updating the guidelines and administrative procedures on formation, reorganization, or dissolution of superintendency unions (in particular, the 1983 *Policy on the Dissolution of a School Union*), per General Laws c. 71, §§ 52, 53A, 53B, 59, 59A, 61, 62, 63, and 64; provided that the Commissioner shall report to the Board on the updated guidelines.**

The vote was unanimous.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:

VOTED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education adjourn the meeting at 12:55 p.m., subject to the call of the chair.

The vote was unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,
Mitchell D. Chester
Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education
and Secretary to the Board

2015A minutes

**Minutes of the Regular Meeting
of the Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education**

Tuesday, February 24, 2015

8:30 p.m. – 2:05 p.m.

Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

75 Pleasant Street, Malden, MA

Members of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education Present:

Margaret McKenna, Chair, Boston

David Roach, Vice-Chair, Millbury

Vanessa Calderón-Rosado, Milton

Katherine Craven, Brookline

Karen Daniels, Milton

Ed Doherty, Boston

James Morton, Springfield

Pendred Noyce, Boston

James Peyser, Secretary of Education

Mary Ann Stewart, Lexington

Donald Willyard, Chair, Student Advisory Council, Revere

Mitchell D. Chester, Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education, Secretary to the Board

Chair McKenna called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m.

Chair McKenna welcomed Secretary of Education James Peyser and Ed Doherty to the Board. She encouraged members to read the National Association of State Boards of Education's recent publication on summer learning.

Commissioner Chester also welcomed Secretary of Education James Peyser and Ed Doherty. He said the severe winter weather has caused many issues for schools, and the Department is looking to district officials to make up the lost time for students. Commissioner Chester gave the Board additional details on the state's snow day policy. He noted the Education Week *Quality Counts* report, which ranked Massachusetts first in the "chance for success" index; the State Auditor's report on charter schools; school technology grants; the state teacher equity plan that the Department will be submitting to the U.S. Department of Education; and the

Massachusetts Business Alliance for Education's comparison report of PARCC and MCAS assessments.

Secretary Peyser said he is honored to be part of the Board again, and he is listening and learning.

Comments from the Public

1. Jason Williams, Massachusetts Executive Director of Stand for Children, and Steve Koczela, of Mass INC Polling Group, addressed the Board on a recent research study.
2. Sergio Paez, Superintendent of Holyoke Public Schools, and Dennis Burks, Holyoke school committee member, addressed the Board on the Holyoke school district review.
3. David J. Ferreira, Executive Director of the Massachusetts Association of Vocational Administrators, addressed the Board on the proposed vocational-technical regulations.
4. Roy Belson, Superintendent of Medford Public Schools, addressed the Board on the proposed vocational-technical regulations.
5. Edward Bouquillon, Superintendent, Minuteman Regional Vocational School District, addressed the Board on the proposed vocational-technical regulations.
6. Kimberley Driscoll, Salem Mayor, addressed the Board on the Bentley Academy Charter School.
7. Justin Vernon, Principal of the Bentley 3-5 Elementary School, addressed the Board on the school's Horace Mann charter application.
8. Janine Mathó, of the Massachusetts Charter Public School Association, addressed the Board on new charter school applicants.
9. Omari Walker, founding member of the New Heights Charter School of Brockton, addressed the Board on the application process.
10. Barbara Madeloni, Massachusetts Teachers Association President, addressed the Board on Holyoke and Level 4 and Level 5 designations.
11. Tracy O'Connell Novick, Worcester School Committee member, addressed the Board on Level 4 and Level 5 designations.

Approval of Minutes

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:

VOTED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education approve the minutes of the December 15, 2014 Special Meeting and the December 16, 2014 Regular Meeting.

The vote was 10-0-1. Secretary Peyser abstained.

State Graduation and Dropout Rates for 2013-2014

Commissioner Chester said the Massachusetts dropout rate is the lowest in three decades: 7 years ago, 3.8 percent of students (11,000) were dropping out, compared to 2.0 percent (5,000) today. He said although we want to see the number decrease further, the positive results are a tribute to educators. He noted groups that had the greatest gaps, such as African-American and low-income students, made significant progress. Commissioner Chester said the Department has focused deliberately on schools and districts with the highest dropout rates, and has promoted the use of the early warning indicator system, the Mass Grad program, and targeted community coalitions.

Deputy Commissioner Alan Ingram acknowledged teachers, administrators, and students for their hard work and the Board for setting policies that have helped reduce the dropout rate. He said the positive results affirm that the policies and programs are working. Rob Curtin, Director of the Office of Education Data Services, reviewed the formula for graduation and dropout calculations. He said the four- and five-year graduation rates rose from the previous year, making this the eighth consecutive year of increased four-year rates. Mr. Curtin said all racial/ethnic groups increased their four-year graduation rate: Hispanic students +2.4 percentage points; Asian students +1.5 percentage points; African-American students +1.1 percentage points. He also reported that urban subgroup graduation rates steadily improved from 2006 to 2014, including: low income +11.6 percentage points, students with disabilities +9.9 percentage points, African-American +11.3 percentage points, Asian +9.8 percentage points, Hispanic +13.7 percentage points, white +8.3 percentage points.

Ms. Noyce asked about funding for dropout prevention programs beyond 2015. Mr. Curtin said an initial goal of the interventions is to build capacity in schools to ensure they are able to sustain their practices. In response to Mr. Roach's questions, Mr. Curtin said providing multiple pathways for students is a key factor, and the Department is working with districts to engrain effective practices and provide tools for administrators. Secretary Peyser noted that as Massachusetts has raised graduation and curriculum standards, graduation rates have continued to rise, despite the conventional notion that students might not be able to reach higher standards.

Holyoke Public Schools

Commissioner Chester said when he arrived in Massachusetts in 2008, the list of districts of most concern included Lawrence, Holyoke, Fall River, New Bedford, and Springfield. He said great progress has been made in Lawrence, and there is promising progress in New Bedford, Fall River, and Springfield. Commissioner Chester said he does not have the same confidence in Holyoke, despite substantial state investment of money and energy in the district over many years. He said alarmingly low student performance is persistent and pervasive, as measured by academic achievement, graduation rates, growth, and suspensions. He said receivership, while not a foregone conclusion, is not off the table.

In response to Mr. Morton's question, Commissioner Chester said he does not see an upward, positive trend in the district. He said the district review painted a sobering picture of classroom instruction. Ms. Daniels said she was both encouraged and discouraged by the district review report. She added that the children cannot wait. Ms. Stewart said the Board should think differently about school turnaround.

Commissioner Chester said he is not recommending any action today; the Board will have the opportunity to review the district's response to the report and will have a further discussion in March.

Breakfast in the Classroom

Commissioner Chester said since the Board last discussed the school breakfast program, he has issued guidance to superintendents on breakfast in the classroom as it relates to student learning time. He said he will meet with urban superintendents in April on this issue and then will report back to the Board on further steps to promote breakfast in the classroom.

Katie Millett, Director of the School Nutrition Program, said all public and private elementary and secondary schools are eligible to participate in the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) School Breakfast Program, and about half of all public schools are required to offer breakfast. She said research shows the benefits of school breakfast include: better academic performance and improved exam scores; decreased tardiness; improved behavior; and increased attention. Ms. Millett presented information on federal and state reimbursement rates for nutrition programs and participation rates.

Andrea Silbert, President of the EOS Foundation, thanked the Commissioner for the student learning time policy clarification. She highlighted the work the EOS Foundation has been doing to assist districts and schools to launch the school breakfast program with grants. Ms. Silbert said the foundation strives to build the capacity of the school to administer the program so they no longer require the additional funding. Taunton Superintendent Julie Hackett said school breakfast and school lunch are important programs in her urban district where eighty percent of students are eligible for free or reduced price meals. Lawrence Superintendent Jeffrey Riley said school breakfast ensures students are ready to learn, particularly in a district where ninety percent of students are of low-income backgrounds. Brockton Superintendent Kathleen Smith there was push-back during early implementation of breakfast in the classroom in her district, but now the staff supports the program, participation has increased, and the students have benefited from it.

In response to Mr. Willyard's question, Ms. Millett said high schools are piloting different methods due to scheduling and volume of students. Ms. Stewart suggested sending a letter to school committees encouraging them to have their schools participate in the school breakfast program. Chair McKenna said the Board is asking the Commissioner to include the breakfast in the classroom program in new Level 4 and Level 5 turnaround plans, where feasible, and encourage current Level 4 and Level 5 schools to participate. She said she is continuing to work with the Department to review school breakfast and summer feeding programs in other states, and she plans to attend the meeting of urban superintendents in April.

The Board took a break at 11:15 a.m.

Charter Schools: Recommendation for New Charter Schools

Commissioner Chester said the charter school approval process began with seven prospectuses, and five applicant groups were invited to submit a full application. He said after a thorough vetting process including hearings, application review by Department staff and external reviewers, and interviews, he is recommending two groups with strong applications: UP Academy Charter School of Springfield and Bentley Academy Charter School. Commissioner Chester said he is troubled by recent comments thanking him or criticizing him for not approving other charter applications. He said all applicants are reviewed and recommendations are made on their merits to deliver a high quality program, not based on political or other motivations. Commissioner Chester said if the other applications had met the full breadth of the criteria, he would have recommended them. He said he rejects the premise of the statement from the Massachusetts Charter School Association on this issue.

Bentley Academy Charter School

Mr. Doherty said he will not vote in support of the charter school applicants for reasons he explained at the special meeting, although he wishes both applicants the best of luck. Ms. Daniels said she attended the Salem hearing and noted the support and enthusiasm of teachers, parents, and community members for the charter school proposal. Ms. Stewart concurred.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:

VOTED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, in accordance with General Laws chapter 71, section 89, and 603 CMR 1.00, and subject to the conditions set forth below, hereby grants a charter to the following school, as recommended by the Commissioner:

Horace Mann Charter:

Bentley Academy Charter School

Location:	Salem
Maximum Enrollment:	350
Grade Levels:	K-5
Opening Year:	FY2016

The charter school shall be operated in accordance with the provisions of General Laws chapter 71, section 89; 603 CMR 1.00; and all other applicable state and federal laws and regulations and such conditions as the Commissioner or the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education may establish, all of which shall be deemed conditions of the charter.

The vote was 10-1-0. Ed Doherty voted in opposition.

UP Academy Charter School of Springfield

James Morton recused himself from participation in the discussion and vote due to his work with the Springfield Empowerment Zone and personal reasons. Secretary Peyser said he has filed an ethics disclosure with the State Ethics Commission relating to his previous work with NewSchools Venture Fund and interactions with Unlocking Potential, and he is able to vote on these matters. A copy of Secretary Peyser's disclosure statement is attached to these minutes.

Commissioner Chester said in the case of both schools, local officials were concerned with the progress of improvement and on their own volition chose to move things forward for the sake of the children. He said the motion for Springfield's UP Academy is unique in that the charter school statute requires the school committee to approve the school plan; however, Springfield now has an Empowerment Zone Board overseeing the middle schools. He said to address this unique circumstance, he is recommending that the Board waive the regulation that ordinarily requires the school committee's full approval before submission of the charter application, and then vote to grant the school a charter with two conditions relating to approval by the Empowerment Zone Board.

Secretary Peyser asked if the Empowerment Zone Board needs to acknowledge the charter or vote to approve the charter. Deputy General Counsel Kristin Valcourt responded, based on the text of the motion.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:

VOTED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, in accordance with 603 CMR 1.03(2), hereby waives 603 CMR 1.04(1)(a)(3) with respect to the application received to establish the UP Academy Charter School of Springfield, a Horace Mann charter school, for circumstances deemed exceptional.

VOTED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, in accordance with General Laws chapter 71, section 89, and 603 CMR 1.00, and subject to the

conditions set forth below, hereby grants a charter to the following school, as recommended by the Commissioner:

Horace Mann Charter:

UP Academy Charter School of Springfield

Location:	Springfield
Maximum Enrollment:	800
Grade Levels:	6-8
Opening Year:	FY2017

The charter school shall be operated in accordance with the provisions of General Laws chapter 71, section 89; 603 CMR 1.00; and all other applicable state and federal laws and regulations and such conditions as the Commissioner or the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education may establish, all of which shall be deemed conditions of the charter; provided that the Board of Trustees of the school shall submit to the Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education: (1) no later than November 1, 2015, certification that the Board of Directors of the Springfield Empowerment Zone Partnership, Inc. has voted to support the UP Academy Charter School of Springfield as a Horace Mann charter school; and (2) no later than November 25, 2015, certification that the Springfield School Committee has acknowledged that vote of support and voted to approve UP Academy Charter School of Springfield unconditionally.

The vote was 9-1-1. Ed Doherty voted in opposition. James Morton abstained.

David Roach commented that there is no question about the integrity and thoroughness of the charter approval process by the Charter School Office, Department, and Commissioner. Chair McKenna agreed and thanked the Commissioner and Department staff for their work.

Amendments to Vocational-Technical Education Regulations, 603 CMR 4.00

Commissioner Chester said that in November 2014, the Board voted to solicit public comment on several proposed amendments to the regulations on vocational-technical education. He said this concludes a multi-year process of review and discussions with stakeholders. The commissioner said he is asking the Board for a final vote to adopt the proposed amendments, which deal primarily with program approval, student admission, and non-resident tuition. Commissioner Chester said the amendments are intended to address various concerns that have been raised in recent years by superintendents in the vocational districts and in the districts that send students to vocational schools.

Deputy Commissioner Jeff Wulfson thanked the field for their input and collaboration. He said the amendments focus on operational issues for vocational-technical schools and the Department recognizes a need to look at the broader picture, such as expanding high quality programs. Mr. Wulfson said non-resident vocational programs are the most costly school choice programs in Massachusetts. He said a future solution could be based on the inter-district school choice model. Mr. Wulfson said in response to comments from agricultural high schools, which are unique vocational-technical programs, the requirements relating to ninth grade exploratory were

modified. He added that the proposed regulations require local schools to send names and addresses of seventh and eighth grade students to regional vocational-technical schools so they can provide information to students and families.

In response to Mr. Roach's question, Mr. Wulfson confirmed that enrollment of non-resident students in ninth grade exploratory programs is limited where an approved Chapter 74 exploratory program is available in the student's home district. Mr. Wulfson added that the Department has standards for exploratory programs. Mr. Roach said the Department's approach, while imperfect, is reasonable. Mr. Roach had questions on the program approval process for Chapter 74 programs. Mr. Wulfson said the approval process includes a required justification as to how the program meets the needs of the labor market and the district.

Mr. Willyard expressed concern about limiting a student's ability to explore a vocational-technical program in another district. Ms. Calderón-Rosado said she is cautious about the regulations going into effect immediately. Chair McKenna suggested that a year's delay might help students currently in the process of applying to a school or an exploratory program.

Commissioner Chester acknowledged the concerns about timing and said that for the past two years the schools, districts, and other stakeholders have been aware of the proposed changes and worked with the Department to draft the final regulations. He said the regulations are a reasonable compromise and it would be inadvisable to go through another school year under the current system. In response to Ms. Noyce's question, Mr. Wulfson said very few non-resident students have been admitted at this time, since the regional schools accept resident students first.

Ms. Noyce made a motion to adopt the regulations as presented. The motion was seconded. Mr. Roach commented that these proposed regulations will clarify the process but cannot address all the concerns because of the inherent tension in supply of and demand for vocational-technical programs. He noted the Department has engaged in a long process with the field to get to this point. Secretary Peyser concurred and said the problems need to be addressed in statute. Secretary Peyser suggested "grandfathering" non-resident students who have already been accepted into programs, so they would be assured the current rules for admission will apply to them.

Mr. Willyard made a motion to broaden the exception in the proposed regulations relating to exploratory programs so that it would cover all such programs, not just specialized agricultural programs. The motion was seconded.

MOVED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education amend §4.03 (6)(b)(1) as proposed, to remove the phrase "specialized agriculture and natural resources programs designated by the Commissioner and" and replace it with "programs."

The motion failed 2-9-0. Mr. Willyard and Ms. Stewart voted in support.

Secretary Peyser moved to amend the main motion by adding a proviso that the rules for approval of non-resident student admissions that were in effect on February 24, 2015 shall apply to any student who applied to and was admitted by a school before the effective date of these amended regulations. He explained this would allow the new regulations to take effect upon publication while providing fairness to students who have already been admitted as non-residents

under the current regulations. He added that the review and approval requirements under the current regulations would still apply to these students. The motion was seconded.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:

VOTED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education amend the main motion, by adding the following proviso:

Provided further, that the rules for approval of non-resident student admissions that were in effect on February 24, 2015 shall apply to any student who applied to and was admitted by a school before the effective date of these amended regulations.

The vote was 10-0-1. Karen Daniels abstained.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:

VOTED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, in accordance with G.L. chapter 69, §§ 1B and 1F and chapter 74, § 2, and having solicited and reviewed public comment in accordance with the Administrative Procedure Act, G.L. chapter 30A, § 3, hereby adopt the amendments to the Vocational Technical Education Regulations, 603 CMR 4.00, as presented by the Commissioner.

Provided further, that the rules for approval of non-resident student admissions that were in effect on February 24, 2015 shall apply to any student who applied to and was admitted by a school before the effective date of these amended regulations.

The vote was 10-0-1. Karen Daniels abstained.

Update on PARCC

Commissioner Chester said he is continuing to provide the Board with monthly updates on PARCC and sufficient background information to ensure the Board has a basis to make a decision in the fall. He said Massachusetts is the only state committed to a two-year “test drive” of PARCC.

Deputy Commissioner Wulfson said PARCC testing began in other states this week and will begin in Massachusetts mid-March. Bob Bickerton presented on the relationship between the 2010 upgraded curriculum frameworks and the PARCC assessment. He said the PARCC assessment system includes a performance-based assessment, end-of-year assessment, and optional diagnostic tools for educators. Mr. Bickerton said the criteria for vetting PARCC include quality, rigor, and efficacy. He said evidence for vetting the assessment will include the field test, operational test, independent studies, scoring, standard setting, and student results. Mr. Bickerton responded to a question from Secretary Peyser about the “ceiling” effect at the high school level.

Deputy Commissioner Wulfson said schools are at various points with their technology upgrades. He said first and foremost, classroom technology upgrades are needed to support

instruction and help students become technology-literate. Mr. Wulfson said districts have access to funding through the state's IT bond bill, federal e-rate funds, and their foundation budget allocation. He said the paper form of the PARCC assessment will be available during the transition to the online assessment. He presented cost estimates to the Board.

In response to Mr. Morton's question, Mr. Bickerton said raw scores on PARCC tests will be available to the Department before we know where they fall on the rating scale, since the standard-setting process will extend into September and October. Commissioner Chester said the PARCC consortium, in which Massachusetts has a leadership role, will set the standards; then each state will decide, as a matter of state policy, what to do with each performance level. For example, he said, the performance standard for entry into credit-bearing college work would likely be higher than the standard for high school graduation. Commissioner Chester noted that the Board will hold a joint meeting in April with the Board of Higher Education, a key partner in the development of PARCC.

In response to a question from Secretary Peyser, Deputy Commissioner Wulfson said testing time for PARCC would be a little less than for MCAS, and that PARCC provides a unified system for formative and summative assessment that is closer to instruction. In response to Ms. Noyce's question, Mr. Wulfson said that each year some assessment items would be released.

Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) Flexibility Waiver Renewal

Commissioner Chester said the waiver Massachusetts received from the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act/No Child Left Behind Act gave the Commonwealth the opportunity to implement a unitary accountability system that maintains our state's high standards and expectations and meets both federal and state requirements. The commissioner said it also gives districts flexibility in the use of Title I funds. Commissioner Chester said if Congress reauthorizes the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, our waiver would be moot, but in the meantime, we need to apply to renew the waiver. He said the system established under the waiver allows us to expand our approach to assist and support districts, identify and remedy performance gaps, expect continuous improvement of schools and districts, reward strong performance, and intervene aggressively in low-performing schools and districts.

Mr. Morton said the waiver has been a positive development and should be renewed. Secretary Peyser suggested the waiver renewal application should seek flexibility and retain the state's prerogatives. Commissioner Chester confirmed that the waiver renewal application will not commit to specific policy details except as required by the U.S. Department of Education. The commissioner said he will ask the Board to endorse the waiver renewal application in March.

Update on Level 5 Schools

Senior Associate Commissioner Russell Johnston presented the update on the Level 5 schools and the Lawrence school district. He said Lawrence is reimagining its high school programs and plans to transition the high school from six individual schools to academies under one unified campus with more structure and time for teachers to collaborate. With respect to Level 5 schools, Mr. Johnston said the career ladder compensation plans at the Dever Elementary and UP Academy Holland have been adjusted, as planned. Commissioner Chester said in Lawrence, 2500 students participated in the acceleration academy during February school vacation week, and New Bedford's Parker School also was open during that week to provide more learning time for students. He said New Bedford community members were invited to the Parker School to

read with students and experience the school. Chair McKenna suggested the Board have a further discussion on the compensation model at a future meeting.

Proposed Action on Recommendations from Commissioner on LGBTQ Youth

Commissioner Chester said the Board previously heard a presentation from the Massachusetts Commission on LGBTQ Youth (Commission), and the Commission asked the Board to review and endorse a set of recommendations on the Support and Safety of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Questioning Students. Commissioner Chester said he has reviewed the recommendations and made some adjustments based upon what is now covered by state statute and removing a self-identification component. He said he will ask the Board to discuss this further and vote to endorse the recommendations in March.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:

VOTED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education adjourn the meeting at 2:05 p.m., subject to the call of the chair.

The vote was unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,
Mitchell D. Chester
Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education
and Secretary to the Board

**Minutes of the Regular Meeting
of the Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education
Tuesday, March, 24, 2015
8:30 a.m. – 12:25 p.m.
Montachusett Regional Vocational Technical School
1050 Westminster St, Fitchburg, MA 01420**

Members of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education Present:

Paul Sagan, Chair, Cambridge
David Roach, Vice-Chair, Millbury
Vanessa Calderón-Rosado, Milton
Margaret McKenna, Boston
James Morton, Springfield
Pendred Noyce, Boston
James Peyser, Secretary of Education
Mary Ann Stewart, Lexington
Donald Willyard, Chair, Student Advisory Council, Revere

Mitchell D. Chester, Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education, Secretary to the Board

Members of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education Absent:

Ed Doherty, Boston
Katherine Craven, Brookline

Chair Sagan called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m.

Chair Sagan said it is an honor and privilege to serve on the Board as its chair. He said he has a profound sense of service to the students and families of the Commonwealth. He said all students deserve a high quality education, and closing the achievement gap is the most important civil rights challenge of our time. Chair Sagan said the Board will move forward, implementing the tools the Legislature has provided, measuring results, addressing weaknesses, and making improvements with urgency. Chair Sagan thanked Margaret McKenna for her service as chair.

Commissioner Chester welcomed Chair Sagan to the Board and thanked Margaret McKenna and former member Karen Daniels for their service. He informed the Board of a recently published Rennie Center study of the PARCC field test in Burlington and Revere. The commissioner distributed the testimony he would be delivering at the legislative Ways and Means budget hearing in the afternoon. Commissioner Chester thanked Montachusett Superintendent Shelia Harrity for hosting the Board meeting.

Secretary Peyser thanked Chair Sagan for accepting his appointment to the Board. He thanked Margaret McKenna and Karen Daniels for their contribution to the Board.

Comments from the Public

1. Carli Fleming, a Teach Plus fellow, addressed the Board on a Teach Plus educator survey on PARCC.
2. Barbara Madeloni, Massachusetts Teachers Association President, addressed the Board on the Holyoke Public Schools District Review.
3. Dorothy Albercht, a Holyoke educator, addressed the Board on the Holyoke Public Schools District Review.

4. Linda Cahill, a parent, addressed the Board on the proposed LGBTQ recommendations.
5. Marc Kenen, Massachusetts Charter Public School Association Executive Director, addressed the Board on a statewide charter school collaborative.

Approval of Minutes

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:

VOTED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education approve the minutes of the February 23, 2015 Special Meeting and the February 24, 2015 Regular Meeting.

The vote was 7-0-1. Chair Sagan abstained.

Superintendent Sheila Harrity welcomed the Board to Montachusett Regional Vocational High School. She said Monty Tech serves 18 communities and 1,450 students and offers 20 vocational-technical programs. She said students from the school recently participated in Skills USA competitions and were named national champions of the Air Force Association's CyberPatriot Program.

Update on PARCC

Deputy Commissioner Jeff Wulfson said the online testing window has begun in Massachusetts. He said the Department has received a small number of inquiries regarding test refusals. Mr. Wulfson noted several studies of the PARCC test that are in process, as well as the recent Rennie Center study. He said Board members have received a letter of support from Massachusetts college presidents and a list of tentative PARCC forum dates. In response to Mr. Roach's question, Mr. Wulfson said of the schools administering the PARCC tests, 50 percent are online, 30 percent are paper and pencil, and 20 percent are mixed. Ms. Stewart said she has heard from parents who have many questions about PARCC. In response to a question from Ms. McKenna, Mr. Wulfson said 12 states are administering PARCC tests this year, and Massachusetts is the only state on a two-year timeline to try out PARCC, other states are fully using results this year.

Vanessa Calderón-Rosado arrived at 9:30 a.m.

Summary of Recent Research on Several Key State Education Initiatives

Associate Commissioner Carrie Conaway reviewed results from eleven studies by the Department and other stakeholders on the implementation of the curriculum frameworks, educator evaluation, and PARCC. She said educators and districts are reporting that implementation of the 2010 curriculum frameworks is proceeding, but is not yet complete; most agree that the new standards will have a positive impact on student learning. She said the survey data shows educator evaluation having a positive impact on student, although challenges remain with district-determined measures. Ms. Conaway said districts are preparing to administer PARCC while anticipating some challenges; she noted that most students who participated in the PARCC field test agreed that all or most of the test questions asked about things they had learned in English language arts and math that year. She said the Department has focused its efforts on aligning educator evaluation with the curriculum frameworks. Ms. Conaway reviewed the initial results from a statewide study on the frequency and use of student assessments, including findings that: across all participating districts, the average number of assessments required by

districts is 6.7; and 83% of participating districts prepare for state assessments 5 days or less per year. Ms. Conaway said phase two of the study will include case studies of district practices.

Holyoke Public Schools District Review Report

Commissioner Chester said he is going to recommend that the Board vote on receivership for the Holyoke Public Schools and the vote will be preceded by a public forum in Holyoke. He said in 2008 he identified five districts of serious concern: Holyoke, Lawrence, Springfield, Fall River, and New Bedford. The commissioner said four of the districts are doing much better now than they were seven years ago, though they still have much to do. In contrast, Holyoke has made little progress.

Commissioner Chester said low student performance in Holyoke is persistent and pervasive, with only one in four students reading on grade level. He said he is not blaming teachers or the superintendent, but he has come to the conclusion that despite pockets of excellence, Holyoke does not have a strong overall educational program or system. Commissioner Chester said in Lawrence, the Commonwealth's first Level 5 district, there is great progress and confidence in the work being done. He said during a visit last week to Worcester's Union Hill School, the principal spoke of the tough decisions that had to be made to propel the school from Level 4 to Level 1.

Rob Curtin, Director of Data Services and District Accountability, said an eight person team led the Holyoke district review. He said the team reported the central office has some strengths but the team also reported concerns about low student achievement and classroom instruction, as seen through observations. In response to Chair Sagan's question, Commissioner Chester said he moved up the scheduled review date in order to have time to get information and make informed decisions. In response to Ms. Noyce's question, Mr. Curtin said he presented the findings to the school committee; he did not ask questions of the school committee. Ms. Stewart requested further information on questions she had submitted to the Department. Mr. Curtin said one member of the review team was from Cambridge Education and the others were retired school administrators with expertise in the six standards. He said family and community engagement was reviewed under student support. He said classroom observations were twenty to thirty minutes.

In response to Mr. Willyard's question, Commissioner Chester said if the Board decides to accept the recommendation, that launches a process to develop a turnaround plan, but there should be no disruption to student learning, just improvement, which could include a broader curriculum and more student learning time. Mr. Roach commented that the Holyoke Teachers Association says it is committed to improvements, but the report says otherwise. Mr. Curtin said the review team found a lack of collaboration between the teachers association and the district administration.

Mr. Morton asked about opposition in Lawrence when the Board intervened. Commissioner Chester said there was opposition; the teachers association opposed receivership, the school committee did not endorse it, and the mayor endorsed receivership. He said there is a much more cohesive school community today, the teachers association has ratified a new contract with radically new working conditions, and things are moving in a very positive direction. Commissioner Chester said he met with the public, the teachers association, and the entire faculty in Lawrence to clear up misconceptions. He said Lawrence now has much more decision-making at the school building/principal/teacher level. In response to Ms. McKenna's question,

Commissioner Chester said about 80% of teachers in Lawrence had the opportunity to stay after receivership, and about two-thirds of the teachers in Lawrence chose to stay.

Commissioner Chester said he is confident in the Department's capacity to lead the turnaround process. He said his recommendation is not solely based on the district review report, but also on the district's history of partnerships and attempts at turnaround, which have yielded very little improvement. He said he sees pockets of excellence at every school, but strong programs at every level should be the rule, not the exception. He said he approaches this task with a great sense of urgency and humility, and that receivership provides a set of tools and authorities that did not exist in the past.

Chair Sagan said the process for improving underperforming schools began in 2010 with the enactment of the Achievement Gap Act, and the Commissioner has made his recommendation. Chair Sagan said the results are not acceptable and the question is how to get better results for the students. He said the Board will schedule a meeting in Holyoke to hear from the community and then will make a decision for the benefit of the students.

Proposed Amendment for Mystic Valley Regional Charter School

Commissioner Chester said Mystic Valley Regional Charter School is requesting 400 additional seats. He noted the charter school is high-performing but there are concerns regarding non-identification of English language learners. He said the school has addressed previous concerns regarding processes and governance. The commissioner said his recommendation allows the school to expand in 2016 once the conditions are met.

In response to Mr. Willyard's question, Associate Commissioner Cliff Chuang said the sending communities do have significant English language learner populations. Ms. Stewart said the Melrose School Committee letter raises concerns.

The commissioner handed out a corrected motion, which was made and seconded.

Secretary Peyser noted that the school has a strong academic record and it must fulfill its responsibilities as a public school. He proposed a substitute motion to allow the school to enroll 50 kindergarten students this fall and continue to meet the conditions. He said if the school does not meet the conditions, it would have to remain at an enrollment cap of 1550.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:

MOVED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, in accordance with General Laws chapter 71, section 89, and 603 CMR 1.00, hereby amends the charter granted to Mystic Valley Regional Charter School, and imposes the following conditions on the school's charter, as presented by the Commissioner: *Mystic Valley Regional Charter School (enrollment increase from 1500 to 1900 with a limit of 835 students from Malden and 300 students from Everett; provided that the enrollment is limited to 1550 students in FY2016 to support enrollment of 175 kindergarten students)*

Location:	Malden
Charter Region:	Everett, Malden, Medford, Melrose, Stoneham, and Wakefield

Maximum Enrollment: 1900 with a limit of 835 from Malden and 300 from
Everett
Grades Served: K-12
Effective year: FY2016

Mystic Valley Regional Charter School shall be operated in accordance with the provisions of General Laws chapter 71, section 89, and 603 CMR 1.00 and all other applicable state and federal laws and regulations and such additional conditions as the Commissioner or the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education may from time to time establish, all of which shall be deemed conditions of the charter; provided further that:

1. In accordance with 603 CMR 1.08(5), the school must update its pre-enrollment report to the Department no later than 5 p.m. on March 25, 2015 to reflect the admittance of an additional 50 kindergarten students from the current waitlist of the school, and the increase in enrollment from 1500 to 1550 for FY2016.
2. By May 1, 2015, MVRCS will submit for Department approval a revised enrollment policy that clearly articulates the school's process for accepting students in each grade with an enrollment preference for siblings, clearly outlines an enrollment growth plan indicating the number of seats available at each grade level as the school expands to 1900 seats, and conforms to Department criteria, and caps enrollment from Malden and Everett at 835 and 300 students respectively.
3. By July 31, 2015, the Board of Trustees of MVRCS will engage in training, conducted by an external consultant acceptable to and approved in advance by the Department, on the roles and responsibilities of a board of trustees of a charter school.
4. By December 31, 2015, MVRCS must establish and operate a program of English language learner education in a manner consistent with the requirements of G.L. c. 71A and all other applicable federal and state laws and regulations.
Specifically:

- a. By May 1, 2015, the school will submit to the Department revised policies and procedures regarding English language learners that comply with current guidance on identification, assessment, placement, and reclassification for review and approval.
- b. By June 30, 2015, and in accordance with the school's revised and approved policies and procedures, the school will reassess all current kindergarten and 1st grade students to determine their eligibility for designation as English language learners.
- c. By December 31, 2015, the school will implement a sheltered English immersion program for students identified as English language learners that corresponds to the needs identified for such students.

In addition to meeting the conditions placed on the charter, MVRCS, like all charter schools, must also comply with all of the terms of its charter. The Commissioner shall review and report to the Board on the success or lack of success of MVRCS, in meeting the conditions on its charter and, based upon his review, shall recommend such further action as he deems appropriate, including subsequent limits to the school's growth plan of student enrollment in fiscal years 2017 through 2018 to an amount less than the maximum enrollment approved herein.

The motion failed, 3-6-0. Secretary Peyser, Chair Sagan, and Donald Willyard voted in favor.
On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:

VOTED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, in accordance with General Laws chapter 71, section 89, and 603 CMR 1.13(4), hereby imposes the following conditions on the charter of Mystic Valley Regional Charter School, as presented by the Commissioner:

1. By May 1, 2015, MVRCS will submit for Department approval a revised enrollment policy that clearly articulates the school's process for accepting students in each grade with an enrollment preference for siblings, clearly outlines an enrollment growth plan indicating the number of seats available at each grade level as the school expands to 1900 seats, conforms to Department criteria, and caps enrollment from Malden and Everett at 835 and 300 students respectively.
2. By July 31, 2015, the Board of Trustees of MVRCS will engage in training, conducted by an external consultant acceptable to and approved in advance by the Department, on the roles and responsibilities of a board of trustees of a charter school.
3. By December 31, 2015, MVRCS must establish and operate a program of English language learner education in a manner consistent with the requirements of G.L. c. 71A and all other applicable federal and state laws and regulations. Specifically:
 - a. By May 1, 2015, the school will submit to the Department revised policies and procedures regarding English language learners that comply with current guidance on identification, assessment, placement, and reclassification for review and approval.
 - b. By June 30, 2015, and in accordance with the school's revised and approved policies and procedures, the school will reassess all current kindergarten and 1st grade students to determine their eligibility for designation as English language learners.
 - c. By December 31, 2015, the school will implement a sheltered English immersion program for students identified as English language learners that corresponds to the needs identified for such students.

Further, upon meeting these conditions, the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, in accordance with General Laws chapter 71, section 89, and 603 CMR 1.00, hereby amends the charter granted to the following school, as presented by the Commissioner:

Mystic Valley Regional Charter School (enrollment increase from 1500 to 1900)

Location:	Malden
Charter Region:	Everett, Malden, Medford, Melrose, Stoneham, and Wakefield
Maximum Enrollment:	1900 with a limit of 835 seats from Malden and 300 seats from Everett
Grades Served:	K-12
Effective year:	The enrollment increase takes effect upon the Commissioner's certification that the conditions have been met, but no earlier than FY2017

In addition to meeting the conditions placed on the charter, Mystic Valley Regional Charter School, like all charter schools, must also comply with all of the terms of its charter. The Commissioner shall review and report to the Board on the success or lack of success of Mystic Valley Regional Charter School, in meeting the conditions on its charter and, based upon his review, shall recommend such further action as he deems appropriate.

The vote was 8-1-0. Mary Ann Stewart voted in opposition.

Ensuring Safe and Supportive Learning Environments for LGBTQ Students

Commissioner Chester thanked the courageous students, parents, and administrators who provided comment. He said the Board heard a presentation from the Massachusetts Commission on LGBTQ Youth in December, and the Commission asked the Board to review and endorse a set of Recommendations on the Support and Safety of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and Questioning Students. He said the revised nine principles, aligned with applicable policies as well as current law and regulations, are intended to provide an updated set of best practices to guide schools in ensuring a safe and supportive climate for LGBTQ students. Vice-Chair Roach said the Department's leadership on this issue has been critical for schools and students.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:

VOTED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education endorse the nine principles for Safe and Supportive Learning Environments for LGBTQ Students, as presented by the Commissioner.

The vote was unanimous.

ESEA Flexibility Waiver Renewal Application

Commissioner Chester said the waiver Massachusetts received from the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act/No Child Left Behind Act gave the Commonwealth the opportunity to implement a unitary accountability system that maintains our state's high standards and expectations and meets both federal and state requirements. Senior Associate Commissioner Russell Johnston said under the proposed waiver renewal, districts would receive additional credit for gains with English language learners, additional time for the inclusion of English language learners in the accountability system, and we would reduce the cohort number to 20 instead of 30.

Chair Sagan noted this is a way to deal with Congressional gridlock on reauthorization. Mr. Johnston confirmed this is a minimalist approach. Secretary Peyser said he wants to ensure a floor is being set, not a ceiling.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:

VOTED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education endorse the Commissioner's proposed request for a three-year renewal of the flexibility waiver for Massachusetts under the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act, as outlined in the Commissioner's March 13, 2015 and January 16, 2015 memoranda and March 24, 2015 presentation, and authorize the Commissioner to submit a flexibility waiver application to the

U.S. Department of Education consistent with the elements contained in his memoranda and presentation.

The vote was unanimous.

Commissioner Chester said he and Secretary Peyser would have to leave the meeting to testify at the Ways & Means Committee hearing. The commissioner offered closing comments on the Holyoke matter, stating that he made the recommendation on Level 5 status only after careful consideration. The commissioner said our job is to use the tools we have to give students the greatest possible chance at success in life. Secretary Peyser and Commissioner Chester left the meeting at 11:45 a.m. Undersecretary Tom Moreau replaced Secretary Peyser at the table. Deputy Commissioner Alan Ingram replaced Commissioner Chester.

Level 5 Schools Update

Senior Associate Commissioner Russell Johnston said this is the third of four FY2015 quarterly progress reports on the Level 5 schools (Paul A. Dever Elementary School and UP Academy Holland in Boston, John Avery Parker Elementary School in New Bedford, and Morgan Full Service Community School in Holyoke). He said the receivers and superintendent are meeting regularly to discuss issues and successes and learn from each other. In response to Ms. Stewart's question, Mr. Johnston said the schools have newsletters, spring events, and regular communications with parents. In response to Ms. Calderón-Rosado's question, Mr. Johnston said no teacher at the Level 5 Boston schools in year one makes less than district educators, and compensation for year two has been adjusted and well received by educators. In response to questions from other Board members, Mr. Johnston said he will provide additional information about parent outreach and about UP Academy Holland's initiative on trauma-informed education.

Summary of Recent Research on Several Key State Education Initiatives (continued)

In response to earlier questions from Board members, Associate Commissioner Carrie Conaway said surveys are done every year for the Department's major initiatives. She said the educator evaluation data will likely show more positive trends this year, after a full year of implementation. Ms. Conaway said the Department's spring and fall convenings of educators have been aligned to address educator evaluation and curriculum. She described the Department's strategic planning and delivery system.

Chair Sagan reviewed upcoming scheduling considerations for Board meetings and PARCC forums.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:

VOTED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education adjourn the meeting at 12:25 p.m., subject to the call of the chair.

The vote was unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,
Mitchell D. Chester
Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education
and Secretary to the Board

**Minutes of the Joint Meeting of the
Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education
and the Massachusetts Board of Higher Education**

Tuesday, April 28, 2015

9:10 a.m. –11:00 a.m.

**Fitchburg State University, Hammond Hall, Main Lounge
160 Pearl Street, Fitchburg, MA**

Members of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education Present:

Paul Sagan, Chair, Cambridge

David Roach, Vice-Chair, Millbury

Vanessa Calderón-Rosado, Milton

Katherine Craven, Brookline

Ed Doherty, Boston

Margaret McKenna, Boston

James Morton, Springfield

Pendred Noyce, Boston

James Peyser, Secretary of Education

Mary Ann Stewart, Lexington

Donald Willyard, Chair, Student Advisory Council, Revere

Mitchell D. Chester, Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education, Secretary to the Board

Members of the Board of Higher Education Present:

Chris Gabrieli, Chair

Maura Banta

Nathan Gregoire

Sheila Harrity

Nancy Hoffman, Ph.D.

Tom Hopcroft

Donald R. Irving

Dani Monroe

James Peyser, Secretary of Education

Fernando M. Reimers

Henry Thomas III

Paul F. Toner

Member of the Board of Higher Education Absent:

Stacey DeBoise Luster, Esq.

Richard Freeland, Commissioner of Higher Education, Secretary to the Board

Board of Higher Education Chair Chris Gabrieli called the joint meeting to order at 9:10 a.m. He thanked President Robert Antonucci for hosting the two boards at Fitchburg State University. President Antonucci welcomed the members to the campus. Board of Elementary and Secondary Education Chair Paul Sagan said the boards are proud of educational successes in Massachusetts and are always looking for ways to improve public education through collaboration. Secretary James Peyser said we have a collective responsibility to overcome obstacles and fulfill aspirations for all students in Massachusetts.

Dimensions of K-12 and Higher Education Collaboration

1. Overview and Discussion of Cross-Sector Initiatives

Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (ESE) Commissioner Mitchell Chester and Department of Higher Education (DHE) Commissioner Richard Freeland distributed handouts and presented an overview of several K-12/high education collaborations and joint initiatives, including the joint definition of college and career readiness adopted by both boards, early college experiences for high school students, Pathways initiatives, and school-to-college data reports. The commissioners responded to questions from board members. Commissioner Freeland said public higher education campuses are experimenting with alternatives to Accuplacer to see if more students can succeed in credit-bearing courses.

Commissioner Freeland said expanding early college/dual enrollment programs is a priority. Chair Gabrieli said it would be important to set specific goals for expanding programs and suggested considering different strategies as well since the dual enrollment program could be viewed as having taxpayers pay twice. Chair Sagan thanked the commissioners for pulling together the information and noted both boards are concerned about the number of students who enroll in but do not complete their higher education programs.

2. PARCC: Overview and Discussion

Commissioner Chester, ESE Deputy Commissioner Jeff Wulfson, and Commissioner Freeland gave a presentation on ESE-DHE collaboration to build the next-generation state student assessment. Commissioner Chester said one-quarter of MA high school graduates do not enroll in college within 16 months of graduating from high school, and over one-third of high school graduates who enroll in MA public higher education (and 65% in community colleges) require remedial courses. He said MCAS, while well regarded in its 18th year, is a grade 10 test and is not designed to show students' readiness for higher education. Commissioner Chester reviewed the history and rationale for Massachusetts joining the PARCC consortium and said PARCC will give students and families clear signals along the way about the student's readiness for the next level. Commissioner Chester and Commissioner Freeland explained the roles of the two boards in relation to policy decisions relating to PARCC and timelines for decision-making.

Deputy Commissioner Wulfson gave an overview of studies that are being conducted to inform the two boards in their decision-making. Secretary Peyser said in addition, Governor Baker has launched a series of public hearings on PARCC around the state under the auspices of the Board of ESE, the first of which will take place this afternoon. Secretary Peyser said the Governor also directed the Secretary to assemble an expert panel to evaluate PARCC research and determine whether more is needed, as part of the open public process to ensure that Massachusetts remains a leader on standards and assessment.

Commissioner Chester responded to questions from members of the boards. He said raising the cut score on the grade 10 MCAS tests is not a viable option because it is only a grade 10 test and many students are already scoring at the proficient and advanced level. Commissioner Chester said if the Board of ESE decides in the fall of 2015 to adopt PARCC, then later the Board of ESE would decide what standard on PARCC tests would qualify students for the high school competency determination. He noted that MCAS will continue to be the competency determination standard through the class of 2019. Commissioner Chester said the Board of Higher Education would decide what standard on PARCC tests would qualify students for entry into credit-bearing college courses. On the question of cost, Commissioner Chester said PARCC looks to be less costly per student than MCAS although there are many variables. Board Chair Sagan said the boards and others will need to know the actual cost. Deputy Commissioner Wulfson responded to questions about administration of PARCC tests online vs. on paper. He said more data on that issue will be available in the fall.

Chair Sagan said the boards welcome more information and public input on PARCC. He and Chair Gabrieli thanked the presenters and commended the interagency collaboration.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:

VOTED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education and Board of Higher Education adjourn their joint meeting at 11:00 a.m., subject to the call of the Chairs.

The vote was unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,
Mitchell D. Chester
Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education
and Secretary to the Board of ESE

**Minutes of the Regular Meeting
of the Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education
Tuesday, May 19, 2015
9:05 a.m. –12:45 p.m.
Pioneer Charter School of Science
51-59 Summer Street, Everett, MA**

Members of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education Present:

Paul Sagan, Chair, Cambridge
David Roach, Vice-Chair, Millbury
Vanessa Calderón-Rosado, Milton
Katherine Craven, Brookline
Ed Doherty, Boston
Margaret McKenna, Boston
James Morton, Boston
Pendred Noyce, Boston
James Peyser, Secretary of Education
Donald Willyard, Chair, Student Advisory Council, Revere

Mitchell D. Chester, Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education, Secretary to the Board

Board member absent:
Mary Ann Stewart, Lexington

Chair Paul Sagan called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m. He thanked Pioneer Charter School of Science for hosting today's meeting.

Commissioner Chester congratulated Margaret McKenna on her recent appointment as president of Suffolk University. He announced that the 2016 Massachusetts Teacher of the Year is Audrey Jackson, who teaches at the Joseph P. Manning School in Boston. Commissioner Chester informed the Board about the extension of the Lawrence turnaround plan and receiver's contract and the recent study by the Donahue Institute of the Smith Vocational and Agricultural High School.

Comments from the Public

1. Christina Shaw Fitanides, of Massachusetts Advocates for Children, addressed the Board on the proposed autism endorsement regulations.
2. Elizabeth Stringer Keefe, Assistant Professor of Special Education, Lesley Graduate School of Education, addressed the Board on the proposed autism endorsement regulations.
3. Erika Ebbel Angle, member of the Board's STEM Advisory Council and biotechnology business owner, addressed the Board on the proposed revised Science, Technology/Engineering standards.
4. Christos Zahopoulos, member of the standards development committee and Governor's STEM Advisory Council, addressed the Board on the proposed revised Science, Technology/Engineering standards.

5. Judy Paolucci, Leicester Public Schools Superintendent and member of the Board's STEM Advisory Council, addressed the Board on the proposed revised Science, Technology/Engineering standards.
6. Gerry Mroz addressed the Board on gifted and talented education.
7. Richard Cowan addressed the Board on Dracut school finance and net school spending.

Approval of Minutes

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:

VOTED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education approve the minutes of the April 27, 2015 Special Meeting and April 28, 2015 Joint Meeting and Regular Meeting.

The vote was unanimous.

Welcome from Pioneer Charter School of Science

Chair Sagan and Commissioner Chester commended Donald Willyard for his service on the Board and the State Student Advisory Council and presented him with a certificate. Mr. Willyard thanked Board members for welcoming him to the Board and working with him. He introduced Barish Icin, Chief Executive Officer, and Sanela Jonuz, Executive Director of Pioneer Charter School of Science, who presented a brief report on the school's programs, facilities, and students.

Proposed Revised Science and Technology/Engineering Standards

Chair Sagan said this agenda item is for discussion only today so the Board can carefully consider the revisions. Commissioner Chester introduced Senior Associate Commissioner Brooke Clenchy, STEM Director Marilyn Decker, and Assistant Director Jake Foster. He said it is industry practice to revisit standards approximately every five years; these proposed revisions would be the first major revisions to the framework since 2001.

Mr. Foster said the revision process started six years ago and has involved about 55 educators and considerable stakeholder input. He said the typical revision and adoption process involves establishing a review panel, recommending needed changes, receiving input from the Board and public, revising the standards, and soliciting public comment, after which the Board adopts revised standards and the Department publishes standards, frameworks, and crosswalk documents. Mr. Foster said in 2011 Massachusetts joined the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) development as a lead state. The NGSS standards were released in April 2013 and the Department developed draft revised STE standards for Massachusetts. In October 2013 the Commissioner informed the Board that the Department would make the draft revised STE standards available to the field and the public for an extended period of review during the 2013-14 and 2014-15 school years. Mr. Foster outlined some key differences between the NGSS standards and the draft revised Massachusetts standards.

Secretary Peyser said he is concerned about an imbalance between too much focus on practice and too little on knowledge and content. He said students need to be able to explain, not just apply, and expectations for content knowledge should be explicit in the standards, not assumed. Ms. Noyce said the standards appear to have more specificity as you move up through the grades. Ms. McKenna said she applauds the flexibility given to educators and the focus on

students having to apply their knowledge. Chair Sagan asked the Commissioner to send a sample crosswalk document to the Board. Secretary Peyser said the Board would benefit from more information about the standards and implications for assessment and accountability, among other things, before it adopts new standards. Commissioner Chester said he appreciates the work of the standards development committee and he will provide additional information to the Board for review and discussion at a future meeting.

Update on Holyoke Public Schools

Commissioner Chester said he continues to update the Holyoke community and Board through frequent communication, weekly messages, and the team of staff who are on-site in Holyoke. He said he has met with community groups, the Holyoke Literacy Partnership, parents, and districts administrators. Commissioner Chester said the members of the local stakeholders group have been named and the receiver will be named shortly. Senior Associate Commissioner Russell Johnston said his team on the ground has been establishing processes for concluding the school year and ramping up planning for the next school year. He said they are gathering information for development of a turnaround plan.

In response to Mr. Doherty's question, Commissioner Chester said Superintendent Paez will stay with the district through the end of June to manage day-to-day operations, checking with the Commissioner as interim receiver on all decisions regarding budget, personnel, and planning. In response to Mr. Roach's question, Commissioner Chester said Project GRAD will no longer be managing the Dean and Morgan schools, since the entire district is now in receivership. In response to Ms. Craven's question, Mr. Johnston said Holyoke is facing a budget deficit although the city will meet its net school spending requirement. Commissioner Chester said we are learning more about the need to address basic systems in the district.

Update on Level 5 Schools

Mr. Johnston informed the Board about the planned June 2 meeting of the receivers, New Bedford superintendent, and principals to discuss the school turnaround work and share information among the Level 5 schools. He said Board members will receive the Level 5 school annual reports in June.

Proposed Amendment to the Charter School Regulations, 603 CMR 1.04(9), to Enable Better Planning for School Districts and Charter Applicants

Commissioner Chester said the proposed amendment is a narrow revision to the regulation that specifies the method for calculating the list of school districts that perform in the lowest 10% on statewide assessments, for purposes of the charter school statute. He said under the current regulation, the list is calculated and published fairly late in the charter application cycle and this year it would be published after final applications have been submitted. Commissioner Chester clarified that the amendment would not change the growth calculation or "not less than two" provision. He said he anticipates the Board would take a final vote on the amendment in the summer or September; meanwhile, districts and applicants would have notice of today's vote.

VOTED: **that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, in accordance with G.L. c. 69, § 1B, and c. 71, § 89, hereby authorize the Commissioner to proceed in accordance with the Administrative Procedure Act, G.L. c. 30A, § 3, to solicit public comment on the proposed amendment to the Charter**

School Regulations, 603 CMR 1.04(9), as presented by the Commissioner. The proposed amendment would enable better planning for school districts and charter applicants; it addresses the calculation of the list of school districts performing in the lowest 10 percent on statewide assessments for purposes of awarding charters and for determining the net school spending caps for individual districts.

The vote was unanimous.

Update on PARCC

Chair Sagan said Board members heard public testimony on PARCC at Bunker Hill Community College on May 18 in lieu of the Monday evening special Board meeting. He said members heard helpful comments and observations specifically on the use of technology, as well as on the PARCC assessment overall. Commissioner Chester said members of the Department's assessment staff have done a great job managing the operation of MCAS and PARCC and providing support to districts. Deputy Commissioner Jeff Wulfson said the consortium made a decision to consolidate the performance-based assessment and end-of-year assessment for English language arts based upon feedback from educators, administrators, and students. He said a college study, sponsored by the Executive Office of Education, is underway, as is outreach to the field regarding options for high school PARCC tests.

In response to Mr. Willard's question, Mr. Wulfson clarified that the cut score for the high school competency determination is made by the Board, college placement decisions are made by the higher education, and the performance levels of PARCC scores are determined by the PARCC governing board. Ms. Calderon-Rosado noted testimony regarding some confusing test questions and difficulty with technology. In response to Mr. Roach's question, Mr. Wulfson said he has confidence in Massachusetts's ability to keep standards high. He said as with MCAS, the Department contracts with a vendor, but directs, develops, and has ultimate control over the assessment. Ms. Noyce suggested Board members have the opportunity to take the PARCC test.

State Student Advisory Council End-of-Year Report

Donald Willyard provided Board members with an overview of the council's work. He said student representatives from five regional councils established a charge over the summer to work on college and career readiness along with civic education. Mr. Willyard presented national civics survey findings and intervention goals. He said the advisory council also established a mentor database, College Yoda, to provide high school students with the means to connect with college students and alumni. Mr. Willyard reviewed recent official stances of the council on policy or regulatory decisions, such as restraint and seclusion and the vocational technical education regulations. He said the Board will receive a full council report in June.

Update on FY2016 State Education Budget

Commissioner Chester said the House of Representatives proposed its budget recommendations for FY2016 earlier in the month and the Senate proposed its budget recommendations late last week. He said he is concerned that the Education Data Services account was eliminated from the Department's budget. Chief Financial Officer Bill Bell said Chapter 70, circuit breaker, and regional transportation funds increased in the Senate budget. He said the Senate did not provide the funding needed to support the Board's decision timeline for PARCC implementation. Mr.

Bell said the Conference Committee will now begin its work and present a final FY2016 budget proposal to the Governor in late June for his review and signature.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:

VOTED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education adjourn the meeting at 12:45 p.m., subject to the call of the Chair.

The vote was unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,
Mitchell D. Chester
Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education
and Secretary to the Board

**Minutes of the Regular Meeting
of the Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education
Tuesday, June 23, 2015
8:35 a.m. – 1:40 p.m.
Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
75 Pleasant Street, Malden, MA**

Members of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education Present:

Paul Sagan, Chair, Cambridge
David Roach, Vice-Chair, Millbury
Vanessa Calderón-Rosado, Milton
Katherine Craven, Brookline
Ed Doherty, Boston
Margaret McKenna, Boston
James Morton, Boston
Pendred Noyce, Boston
James Peyser, Secretary of Education
Mary Ann Stewart, Lexington
Donald Willyard, Chair, Student Advisory Council, Revere

Mitchell D. Chester, Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education, Secretary to the Board

Chair Paul Sagan called the meeting to order at 8:35 a.m.

Commissioner Chester said he recently attended an event to honor the Massachusetts Teacher of the Year, Audrey Jackson, along with finalists and semifinalists for the award, the 2015 Massachusetts History Teacher of the Year, the 2014 Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching finalists, and the 2014 Milken Family Foundation National Educator. The Commissioner informed the Board that the Department has submitted the State Plan to Ensure Equitable Access to Excellent Educators to the U.S. Department of Education. Commissioner Chester commented on the Department's Spring Convening, which brought together over 800 educators from about 200 districts across the Commonwealth to work on initiatives to strengthen teaching and learning. He provided an update on the charter school application cycle, which begins over the summer. Commissioner Chester said that he, Chair Sagan, and Secretary Peyser presented testimony to the Joint Committee on Education in opposition to bills that would place a moratorium on statewide student assessments and on the current system for accountability and assistance for schools and districts.

Comments from the Public

1. Megan Tincher and James Odierna, teachers from Needham High School, addressed the Board on civics education and the Working Group on Civic Learning and Engagement.
2. Haley Bowse and Tommy Kelley, Needham High School Class of 2015, addressed the Board on civic learning.
3. Emily Haber, Executive Director of the Mass Service Alliance, addressed the Board on civic learning.
4. Christina Shaw Fitanides, of Massachusetts Advocates for Children, addressed the Board on the proposed autism specialist endorsement regulations.
5. Elizabeth Stringer Keefe, of Lesley Graduate School of Education, addressed the Board on the proposed autism specialist endorsement regulations.

6. Janet Anderson, Massachusetts Teachers Association Vice President, addressed the Board on the proposed autism specialist endorsement regulations.

Approval of Minutes

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:

VOTED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education approve the minutes of the May 19, 2015 Regular Meeting.

The vote was unanimous.

Annual Performance Evaluation of the Commissioner: Report from Committee on Commissioner's Performance Evaluation

Committee Chair Penny Noyce presented the committee's report and recommendations. She said the committee, which included Paul Sagan, David Roach, and James Morton, began by reviewing the five areas of performance in which the Commissioner is evaluated and the criteria used to evaluate these areas. The committee gathered data from various sources including the Department's performance results, the Commissioner's self-assessment, and input from other members of the Board, the Commissioner's leadership team, and the leadership of the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents.

Ms. Noyce said as chief state school officer, the Commissioner has maintained a visible public profile throughout the state, visited many schools, met regularly with the Superintendents' Advisory Council, worked closely with the Executive Office of Education and the Departments of Higher Education and Early Education and Care, implemented a clear and flexible strategy for Level 4 and 5 schools, and led a successful second year of the test drive of PARCC, among other initiatives. The statewide dropout rate fell to its lowest level in three decades and the four-year graduation rate is at an all-time high. Ms. Noyce said the committee recommends a rating of 5 in this area, as the Commissioner exceeded the Board's expectations.

In the area of leading the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, Ms. Noyce said the Commissioner also earned a 5 rating; he receives stellar reviews from his leadership team, communicates high expectations, has put in place an effective delivery system to track the agency's progress, and recognizes the need for strategic reorganization to address funding and staffing challenges.

Ms. Noyce said in the area of managing external relations, the Commissioner continued to make effective use of the Superintendents' Advisory Council, the Teacher Leadership Cabinet, and two Principal Advisory Groups, and he has advanced the Board's priorities through regular meetings and communication with the Legislature. She said one communication problem this year was the delay in acknowledging and informing charter applicants and districts that two charter proposals would be ineligible because of the interplay of statutes, regulations, and policies regarding the lowest ten percent of districts, and the Commissioner mitigated the gap with a Board-approved regulatory waiver for FY2015. Ms. Noyce said the committee's recommended rating in this area is 4.5, as the Commissioner fully met the Board's expectations.

In the area of Board support, Ms. Noyce said the Commissioner earned a rating of 5. She noted he provides outstanding support to Board members through weekly reports, monthly calls, and constant availability and responsiveness; assembles staff and resources for informative special meetings; and supports the Board's committees. She said the committee encourages the

Commissioner to involve the Board in important policy discussions as early in the decision cycle as possible.

Ms. Noyce said in the area of national leadership, the Commissioner does an outstanding job of representing Massachusetts on the national education scene, enhancing the Commonwealth's position as a national leader in education reform and student achievement. Ms. Noyce said the Commissioner's role as board member and chair of the PARCC governing board has been important to Massachusetts, ensuring that the test is developed for the benefit of the states and not the vendor. The Commissioner's chairmanship allows Massachusetts to closely monitor test quality, insist on high-quality studies of the test's reliability and validity, provide leadership to other states, and potentially move to a next-generation assessment in a more affordable way than the state could manage alone. She said the committee affirms its full support for the Commissioner playing this role for the benefit of the Commonwealth, and that the committee recommends a rating of 5, as the Commissioner exceeded the Board's expectations in this area.

Ms. Noyce said the Commissioner's overall performance in FY2015 has been outstanding, receiving very high marks (4.9 in total) based on the criteria. She said the committee affirms its strong endorsement of the Commissioner and recommends that the Board do so as well. Ms. Noyce said the committee recommends a salary increase of 2.5%, effective July 1, 2015. Further, the committee believes it is essential that the Commissioner continue his involvement in the critical work of district turnaround, and therefore recommends a mutual commitment, such that if the Commissioner leaves his position in the next three years, other than for cause, he shall continue as a special advisor to the Board and Department on the work with turnaround districts for a period of six months.

Mr. Morton commended the Commissioner's leadership, his support to the Board, and the fact that he is never satisfied as long as proficiency gaps remain. Mr. Roach said it is evident through conversations with senior leadership that the Commissioner is greatly respected and the Department is committed to the Board's goals. He noted the Commissioner's focus on all schools and students in the Commonwealth, not just those in Level 4 and Level 5 districts. Mr. Roach commended the Commissioner for maintaining balance with a great array of complex work and for his willingness to listen to the field and moderate the pace where appropriate.

Chair Sagan thanked Ms. Noyce for chairing the committee. He said the Commissioner is doing a great job and it is no coincidence that Massachusetts is at the top of U.S. rankings in many measures of K-12 achievement. Chair Sagan said it has been a challenging year and the committee's unanimous recommendation is that the Commissioner is doing an excellent job. The Chair said the proposed salary increase is the most the committee could do now and they will revisit it when possible. Chair Sagan said the committee views it as essential that the Commissioner continue his involvement in the turnaround work.

Secretary Peyser thanked Ms. Noyce and the other members of the committee. He commended the Commissioner's work in Lawrence and in Holyoke for the past six months, moving with a sense of urgency, guiding the Board, and laying the foundation for positive changes for students. Secretary Peyser said there will be management challenges with the end of Race to the Top, early retirement, and budget cuts, which will require some creative restructuring. He said the Board is the Commissioner's ally in this work, and congratulated him for a job well done.

Mr. Willyard said he appreciates that the Commissioner welcomed him to the Board, quickly brought him up to speed, and has supported the State Student Advisory Council. He suggested communication should continue to be a priority. Ms. Stewart asked about the process for developing the criteria for the performance evaluation. She requested more time to review the

materials next year. Chair Sagan said the committee will revisit the criteria in the fall. Ms. Calderón-Rosado said during her time chairing the evaluation committee over several years, the criteria were revised and additional details and weights were added. She thanked the Commissioner for his exceptional leadership and for not being complacent when it comes to results for low income students and children of color. Ms. McKenna requested to receive materials well in advance of meetings and recommended including specific measurable goals within the evaluation rubric. She said communication is an area that continues to need attention, particularly with educators and superintendents, and suggested that the Commissioner could use the self-evaluation to identify areas for growth as well as accomplishments.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:

VOTED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education approves the Commissioner's FY2015 performance rating of "outstanding" as recommended by the Board's committee. The Board further approves a salary increase for the Commissioner of 2.5% percent, effective July 1, 2015. Further, in recognition that the vital work of district turnaround is at a pivotal point, the Board endorses a mutual commitment, such that if the Commissioner leaves his position in the next three years other than for cause, he shall continue as a special advisor to the Board and Department on the work with turnaround districts for a period of six months.

The vote was unanimous.

Commissioner Chester said he appreciates the Board's confidence and does not take it for granted. He credited Department staff for their outstanding leadership and service. He said he appreciates Secretary Peyser's and Governor Baker's commitment to education. The Commissioner pledged that he will continue to focus on what is best for students.

Strengthening Civic Learning

David Roach, chair of the Working Group on Civic Learning and Engagement, introduced members of the working group in attendance, including: Maureen Binienda, Roger Desrosiers, Daniel Gutekanst, Kristen McKinnon, Alan Melchior, Elena Quiroz, John Reiff, and Mark Wilson. They summarized the report for the Board.

Mr. Wilson said a number of national research studies and policy initiatives have highlighted the importance of civic learning as a fundamental requirement of democracy. He outlined policy initiatives in other states, including Florida, Tennessee, Hawaii, Utah, Connecticut, and Arizona. Mr. Melchior said districts are finding new ways to assess civic learning through students' application of skills and knowledge. Mr. Reiff said the Department of Higher Education's original Vision Project Report did not include preparation for citizenship, but in response to a study group, the Board of Higher Education adopted a policy on civic learning for state colleges and universities and will work with the higher education campuses to incorporate civic learning as an expected outcome for undergraduate students. Ms. McKinnon outlined some promising practices in areas of classroom instruction, service learning, and extracurricular activities.

Mr. Roach presented the six recommendations from the working group. He said the Edward M. Kennedy Institute has agreed to partner with the Department on the network of regional advisory councils that the working group has recommended to be established. Mr. Roach asked the Board to accept the report and direct the Commissioner to move the recommendations forward.

Chair Sagan thanked Mr. Roach for his leadership and the working group for their thoughtful work. He said the Board accepts the report and would like the Commissioner to study the recommendations and provide guidance on next steps. The Commissioner agreed to come back with his plan in September or October. Mr. Roach said earlier action is needed if the regional advisory councils are to be set up. Secretary Peyser cautioned that layering more advisory councils on top of existing ones could be burdensome, and suggested the Commissioner should determine resources first. The Secretary added that the working group's recommendation to update the history and social science framework should prompt consideration of reviving a history assessment and incorporating it into the high school graduation requirement. Mr. Willyard said the State Student Advisory Council has discussed community service as a graduation requirement. Mr. Roach said this idea is worth exploring further.

Mr. Roach urged the Board to vote to accept the report and the six recommendations. Chair Sagan said the Board would accept the report and direct the Commissioner to act expeditiously to review the recommendations and bring back an action plan in September. Mr. Doherty said he would make a motion to endorse the recommendations, and if they cannot be implemented, the Commissioner would tell the Board. Chair Sagan said he would prefer to have the Commissioner review them first and present a plan, rather than set it up for potential failure. Ms. Calderón-Rosado agreed with the Chair and said the Board might not want to be constrained by these specific recommendations; for example, she said if there is a grant program, it should give greater weight to districts with more low income students. The Commissioner said he would prefer that the Board accept the report and then he would come back with his recommendations.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:

VOTED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education accept the report of the Working Group on Civic Learning and Engagement and endorse its recommendations, and direct the Commissioner to come back to the Board at its September 2015 meeting with a plan for implementing the recommendations.

The motion passed 6-5. Chair Sagan, Ms. Calderón-Rosado, Mr. Morton, Ms. Noyce, and Secretary Peyser voted in opposition.

Lawrence Public Schools: Progress Report on Third Year of Receivership

Commissioner Chester said he recently renewed the district turnaround plan and the contract for Receiver Jeff Riley to continue the work for three additional years. Mr. Riley said this year Lawrence had its largest class of high school graduates in history: 750 students. He said during the 2014-2015 school year the district: launched the plan to re-imagine Lawrence High School; opened a new family resource center and online registration platform; formalized a Lawrence Partnership Council with the Lawrence Teachers Union; created 130 new preschool seats with the assistance of a federal grant; and continued educator leadership initiatives. The Receiver said there was a significant expansion of enrichment programming for students. He reviewed highlights of the renewed turnaround plan.

In response to Ms. Stewart's questions, Mr. Riley said non-renewal of educators may occur for various reasons including an evaluation, incomplete certification requirements, or attendance record. He added that he met with all non-renewed educators. Mr. Doherty said the number of non-renewed educators seems high, and while there are legitimate reasons for non-renewal, he has heard concerns about fairness. Mr. Doherty asked Mr. Riley to review all the non-renewal

situations. In response to Mr. Roach, Mr. Riley said every non-renewed educator received an evaluation. Mr. Roach said the effectiveness of educator evaluation depends on its fairness.

Mr. Riley said he is confident that a fair process occurred. Commissioner Chester said he has explored these issues with Mr. Riley and is confident about the process. He said the high school redesign process has been very deliberate with great faculty engagement. Chair Sagan thanked Mr. Riley for all his work and for signing up for another three years as Receiver.

Update on Holyoke Public Schools

Commissioner Chester introduced Senior Associate Commissioner Russell Johnston and newly appointed Holyoke Receiver Stephen Zrike. Mr. Zrike addressed the Board, first in Spanish and then in English. He said he is aware that the work will be challenging but rewarding. Mr. Zrike said he has already visited the district and has spoken with some teachers and parents.

In response to Mr. Morton's question, Mr. Johnston said the Department and the Receiver are engaging with as many community organizations as possible, as well as higher education, the Departments of Children and Families and Transitional Assistance, regional employment boards, parents, and teachers. He said the community conversations and the meetings of the local stakeholders group have been very worthwhile. Ms. Calderón-Rosado commended Mr. Zrike and the Department for their outreach to the Holyoke community.

Update on Level 5 Schools

Commissioner Chester said Board members have received the FY2015 Quarter 4 progress reports and the annual evaluations on the four Level 5 schools. He clarified that the Morgan School will no longer be overseen by Project Grad now that Holyoke is under receivership as a district. Senior Associate Commissioner Russell Johnston said several themes run across the four schools, including the establishment of positive school culture; family engagement; supporting English language learners; and training educators for the Sheltered English Immersion endorsement. He said additional data will be available in the fall.

Update on FY2016 State Education Budget

Commissioner Chester gave a brief overview of the Conference Committee process, which will lead to presentation of the final FY2016 budget to the Governor in late June. Chief Financial Officer Bill Bell said the Senate increased Chapter 70 aid by \$111.2M (2.5%) over FY2015 and provided the funding needed to support the Board's decision timeline for PARCC implementation. Mr. Bell said in the Senate version of the budget, the Education Data Services account has been eliminated from the Department's budget and consolidated into the Executive Office of Education account with reduced funding. In response to Ms. Stewart's question, Commissioner Chester said MCAS testing in English language arts and math costs \$46 per student and PARCC costs approximately \$10 less per student.

Breakfast in the Classroom

Commissioner Chester introduced Nutrition Director Katie Millet and commended her for her work on school nutrition programs, noting that she is retiring at the end of June. Ms. Millett said school breakfast yields many positive outcomes for students and the overall classroom environment. She presented participation results from schools comparing data before and after the schools introduced breakfast in the classroom. Ms. Millett said since the Department issued its 2015 guidance on student learning time in relation to breakfast, there has been more interest

in breakfast in the classroom, and the Department has focused additional outreach and technical assistance on lower income, low participation districts. She said she expects participation will increase in the next school year. Ms. McKenna thanked Ms. Millett for her work on this initiative. She said breakfast in the classroom truly makes a difference for students and suggested it should be required in Level 4 and 5 schools.

Redefining Low Income – A New Metric for K-12 Education Data

Commissioner Chester said the commonly used metric for measuring income status has been eligibility for free or reduced price meals under the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) school nutrition program. He said under a new USDA program, all students in schools and districts with high concentrations of low income students are eligible to receive free meals, eliminating the paperwork burden for families and schools. Commissioner Chester said without the availability of free and reduced price meals data in many of our largest districts, we needed to develop a new income status metric that could be used consistently across the state, now referred to as economically disadvantaged.

Deputy Commissioner Wulfson said the new measure will be based on a student's participation in one or more of the following state-administered programs: the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP); Transitional Assistance for Families with Dependent Children; the Department of Children and Families' foster care program; and MassHealth (Medicaid).

Chair Sagan said schools and districts should not be penalized for the unintended consequences of a good USDA policy that benefits students. Ms. Calderón-Rosado said it is disorienting to see the dramatic changes in the number of low income students being reported in some districts. Commissioner Chester said the Department will continue to review the data and alternative options with districts. Chair Sagan suggested that Katherine Craven work with the Department on reviewing the policy.

Regulations on Autism Endorsement for Educator Licensure, 603 CMR 7.00

Commissioner Chester said after the Legislature enacted a law directing the Board to establish an educator licensure endorsement in autism, the Board voted to solicit public comment on the proposed amendments to the educator licensure regulations. He said although the law directs the Board to develop the autism endorsement for licensed special education teachers, he is recommending that this endorsement also be made available to early childhood and elementary teachers as well as teachers licensed in core academic subject areas, to encourage inclusion of students with disabilities in general education. Special Education Director Marty Mitnacht said this is a voluntary endorsement, not a license, and does not qualify a general educator to be a special education teacher.

Ms. McKenna said the law specifically intended the endorsement for special education teachers. She said the Department is going beyond the intent of the law and creating confusion for parents. Ms. Noyce asked what the disadvantage would be if the license were limited to special education teachers. Senior Associate Commissioner Russell Johnston said limiting the license to only special education teachers goes against the notion of inclusive classrooms. A motion was made and seconded to adopt the regulations as presented. Mr. Doherty moved to amend the motion to include four amendments proposed by the Massachusetts Teachers Association (MTA). Chair Sagan suggested the Board proceed with other agenda items so that staff could take time to review the MTA's proposed amendments and then return to the discussion.

Delegation of Authority to Commissioner to take Necessary Action between Board Meetings

Commissioner Chester said annually the Board delegates authority to the Commissioner to take necessary action during the summer months when the Board does not meet; the Commissioner notifies Board members in advance of any such action and reports to the Board on any matters that have been so approved. A motion was made and seconded. Mr. Willyard asked if a Board member objects, would the matter then be held for the Board. Chair Sagan said that would undermine the purpose of the delegation. Secretary Peyser said the Commissioner could consult with the Chair on delegated actions, as is done by the Higher Education Commissioner and Board Chair. Chair Sagan said he would be happy to consult but believes it is unnecessary. Ms. Stewart suggested modifying the original motion to require the Commissioner to consult with both the Chair and Vice-Chair prior to any action. The Commissioner noted that the motion includes one specific item relating to approval of a charter school management contract. He said he would continue to keep the Board informed of any actions he takes under delegated authority.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:

MOVED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education authorize the Commissioner, in accordance with General Laws c. 15, § 1F, paragraph 3, to act on behalf of the Board in approving any matters that are not otherwise covered by the Board's previous delegations of authority and that require Board action between June 23, 2015 and the next regular meeting of the Board in September 2015, including the approval of an amendment to the contract between the board of trustees of the SABIS International Charter School and Springfield Education Management, LLC, pursuant to General Laws c. 71 § 89(k)(5); provided that the Commissioner shall consult with both the Chair and Vice-Chair in advance of any such action and shall report to the Board on any matters that have been so approved.

The motion failed, 4-7. Mr. Doherty, Ms. McKenna, Ms. Stewart, and Mr. Willyard voted in favor.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:

VOTED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education authorize the Commissioner, in accordance with General Laws c. 15, § 1F, paragraph 3, to act on behalf of the Board in approving any matters that are not otherwise covered by the Board's previous delegations of authority and that require Board action between June 23, 2015 and the next regular meeting of the Board in September 2015, including the approval of an amendment to the contract between the board of trustees of the SABIS International Charter School and Springfield Education Management, LLC, pursuant to General Laws c. 71 § 89(k)(5); provided that the Commissioner shall consult with the Chair in advance of any such action and shall report to the Board on any matters that have been so approved.

The vote was 6-4-1. Ms. Calderón-Rosado, Mr. Morton, Ms. Noyce, and Mr. Roach voted in opposition. Chair Sagan abstained.

Proposed 2015-2016 Board Meeting Dates

The Board reviewed the list of proposed meeting dates for the 2015-2016 school year, noting that the January 2016 meeting will be a joint meeting with the Board of Higher Education.

VOTED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education approve the schedule of regular meetings through June 2016, as presented by the Commissioner.

The vote was unanimous.

Update on PARCC

Chair Sagan presented a brief report on the Monday evening, June 22 PARCC forum held at North Shore Community College. He distributed a PARCC/MCAS English language arts and math question analysis done by Match Charter Public School. Deputy Commissioner Jeff Wulfson said about half of the PARCC tests administered in Massachusetts this year were administered online. He said the standard setting process will occur this summer with educators and education experts from across the country. Chair Sagan noted that the Board's fifth PARCC forum will be held in Springfield on July 7.

Regulations on Autism Endorsement for Educator Licensure, 603 CMR 7.00 (Continued)

Ms. McKenna asked if the credential could be called something other than an endorsement. Commissioner Chester asked staff to comment on the MTA's proposed amendments. He cautioned against limiting the authority of school officials to set qualifications for particular teaching assignments. Commissioner Chester recommended that the Board table this item to allow more time for staff review, and he will bring the regulations back to the Board in September. Mr. Doherty suggested that Department staff talk with the MTA about their proposed amendments. Chair Sagan suggested talking with Ms. McKenna as well. The Board agreed to table the item.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:

VOTED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education adjourn the meeting at 1:40 p.m., subject to the call of the Chair.

The vote was unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,
Mitchell D. Chester
Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education
and Secretary to the Board

**Minutes of the Special Meeting
of the Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education
Monday, September 21, 2015
5:05 p.m.- 7:30 p.m.
Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
75 Pleasant Street, Malden, MA**

Members of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education Present:

Paul Sagan, Chair, Cambridge

Katherine Craven, Brookline

Ed Doherty, Boston

Roland Fryer, Concord

Margaret McKenna, Boston

Michael Moriarty, Holyoke

James Morton, Boston

Pendred Noyce, Boston

James Peyser, Secretary of Education

Mary Ann Stewart, Lexington

Donald Willyard, Chair, Student Advisory Council, Revere

Mitchell D. Chester, Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education, Secretary to the Board

Chair Sagan welcomed Board members and called the meeting to order at 5:05 p.m. He said tonight's discussion is one of several this fall leading up to the Board's decision in November about Massachusetts statewide assessment. He encouraged members to ask questions and get the information they need to make a sound decision. Commissioner Chester welcomed Board members, including new members Roland Fryer and Michael Moriarty. Commissioner Chester provided an overview of the meeting agenda and introduced Deputy Commissioner Jeff Wulfson, Associate Commissioner Liz Davis, and MCAS/PARCC Director Bob Lee.

Mr. Lee reminded Board members that districts had the choice of PARCC or MCAS in school year 2014-2015; 54% chose PARCC and 46% chose MCAS. All students in grade 10 took MCAS in order to meet the statewide graduation requirement. He said the three largest cities, Boston, Springfield and Worcester, were able to choose on a school-by-school basis.

Mr. Lee presented statewide MCAS results. In grade 10, 91 percent of students scored Proficient or higher in English language arts (ELA), 79 percent in mathematics, and 72 percent in science, technology/engineering. He said in most schools in 2015, the percentage of students who scored Proficient or above grew or held steady compared to last year. Commissioner Chester said reporting assessment results is challenging this year because we are comparing results on two different tests. Mr. Lee explained the representative sample used to calculate trends.

Mr. Lee said from 2014 to 2015 some grades showed improvement: in ELA grade 3 (+3), grade 5 (+7), and grade 6 (+3); in mathematics grade 5 (+6) and grade 8 (+8). He said results compared to 2007 showed gains in almost all grades, most notably in grade 10 ELA (+21); mathematics grade 3 (+10), grade 5 (+16), grade 8 (+15) and grade 10 (+10); and science grade 8 (+9) and grade 10 (+15). Mr. Lee said achievement gaps have narrowed since 2007 between white students and African-American/Black and Hispanic/Latino students, but still remain large. In response to questions, Mr. Lee said the MCAS cut scores have not been modified.

Ms. Craven, Ms. McKenna, and Mr. Moriarty arrived at 5:20 p.m.

Commissioner Chester said the PARCC results are preliminary and cover only the computer-based assessment. He said 41% of PARCC students took paper-based tests, for which scores are not yet available, and testing at the high school level was voluntary. Mr. Lee said PARCC performance levels 1-5 differ from MCAS performance levels. He said about half of students in grades 3-8 met the PARCC Level 4 or Level 5 expectations.

Commissioner Chester provided the Board with a list of guiding questions and asked members for additional suggestions. Board members requested the following additions:

- What is the total estimated cost to get all remaining schools up to the PARCC technology standard?
- What schools (sorted by county) are on ESE's not-yet-up-to-PARCC-technology-standard list?
- What are the college remediation rates for students who scored proficient or higher on MCAS?
- How did PARCC scores for 9th/11th graders correlate with their previous year's MCAS score?
- Why did other states leave the PARCC consortium?
- Who owns PARCC intellectual property?
- What accommodations are available for PARCC in comparison to MCAS?
- What would the process be to re-develop MCAS? What would the re-developed MCAS look like?
- What is MCAS missing and in what areas is it lacking?
- How will the assessment be used as part of a larger system?
- Are the PARCC test items age-appropriate?
- Is there a correlation between MCAS results and later-life outcomes?
- Detailed information on PARCC item types.
- How many students completed the PARCC test within the time allowed?
- PARCC governance structure and Massachusetts leadership role going forward.
- What are the PARCC pricing tiers under the current Pearson contract?
- What is the per test cost of PARCC and MCAS?

Deputy Commissioner Wulfson presented the historical background of statewide assessments and standards, beginning with the 1993 Supreme Judicial Court decision in the *McDuffy* case and the 1993 Education Reform Act. He said the first MCAS tests were introduced in 1998, with additional grades and subjects added in 2001, 2006, and 2007. Mr. Wulfson said the benefits of a next-generation assessment include full alignment to the 2010 Massachusetts ELA and mathematics frameworks, more emphasis on critical thinking and reasoning, better feedback on readiness for next level, richer data to inform instruction, an online platform, and pathways to entry-level college credit. Mr. Wulfson reviewed the PARCC timeline, from Massachusetts joining the PARCC consortium in 2010, through the two-year test drive, leading up to the decision the Board will make in November 2015. He reviewed differences between the two assessments, including the governance structures.

Associate Commissioner Liz Davis explained the development process for building an assessment, including the life cycle of a test item. She said Department staff have been involved with PARCC throughout the process, including the initial test design, subsequent revisions, test item reviews, analysis of data and test construction, scoring, and reporting. Massachusetts educators have participated in the item review, scoring, and reporting processes.

Mary Ann Stewart left the meeting at 6:35 p.m.

Commissioner Chester said the PARCC performance level setting process was one of the most sophisticated he has seen. He said it included the Governing Board defining college-ready standards, a post-secondary educators' judgment study, a benchmark study comparing other national assessments, a pre-policy meeting, recommendations from the performance level setting, and the Governing Board's adoption of performance levels. He introduced two Massachusetts educators who participated in the standard setting, Loretta Hollaway from Framingham State University and Victoria Miles from the Middleborough Public Schools.

Ms. Hollaway presented an overview of the performance level setting process. She said educators reviewed each test, including multiple forms, and performance level descriptors to set expectations and make recommendations. She said higher education does not use MCAS scores or have faith in the ability of MCAS to determine placement of students in higher education courses. Ms. Hollaway said higher education faculty are currently discussing the value of PARCC to determining students' readiness for college-level coursework. She added that she is impressed with the critical thinking questions on the PARCC tests.

Ms. Miles provided Board members with a concept map of the PARCC process and MCAS development process. She said before participating in PARCC standard setting, she had been involved in MCAS test development. Ms. Miles said she likes the PARCC interactive test format although she noted the multiple choice items are not scaffolded; if students answer one part incorrectly, it is difficult for them to move on to the next part of the question. In response to Secretary Peyser's question, Ms. Miles said PARCC could prompt teachers to teach differently by creating more interactive tests. She added that if a test item is instructionally worthy, then good instruction should follow.

Ken Klau, the Department's Director of Digital Learning, presented data on schools' technology readiness for PARCC and digital learning. He said 1,634 schools reported their technology readiness, and of that group, 55.8% reported being ready for PARCC and digital learning, 75.5% reported being ready for PARCC only, and 23.7% reported not being ready for PARCC or digital learning. Commissioner Chester noted that schools need less infrastructure to administer the online PARCC assessments than to do digital learning. He said he would provide additional updated information on technology readiness to the Board for the October meeting.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:

VOTED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education adjourn the meeting at 7:30 p.m., subject to the call of the Chair.

The vote was unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,
Mitchell D. Chester
Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education
and Secretary to the Board

2015B minutes

**Minutes of the Regular Meeting
of the Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education
Tuesday, September 22, 2015
8:30 a.m.- 1:05 p.m.
Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
75 Pleasant Street, Malden, MA**

Members of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education Present:

Paul Sagan, Chair, Cambridge
Katherine Craven, Brookline
Ed Doherty, Boston
Roland Fryer, Concord
Margaret McKenna, Boston
Michael Moriarty, Holyoke
James Morton, Boston
Pendred Noyce, Boston
James Peyser, Secretary of Education
Mary Ann Stewart, Lexington
Donald Willyard, Chair, Student Advisory Council, Revere

Mitchell D. Chester, Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education, Secretary to the Board

Chair Paul Sagan called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m. He welcomed newly appointed members Roland Fryer and Michael Moriarty to the Board. Chair Sagan thanked former members David Roach and Vanessa Calderón-Rosado for their service to the Board and the Commonwealth's students. He said the Board discussed statewide MCAS results and PARCC at last night's special meeting.

Commissioner Chester welcomed Roland Fryer and Michael Moriarty to the Board. He updated the Board on the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act reauthorization, state ballot initiatives, charter school matters, an educator preparation initiative called Candidate Assessment for Performance, and his launch of an organizational review of the Department. He said the U.S. Department of Education has approved Massachusetts's educator equity plan, and also has rated the state as meeting all federal special education requirements. Commissioner Chester provided the Board with a document outlining the history of the Massachusetts curriculum frameworks. Chair Sagan commented that Massachusetts has been and will continue to be a leader in curriculum standards and thanked the Commissioner for providing the history of the standards and for correcting misinformation that has been circulated about the current standards.

Secretary Peyser welcomed Roland Fryer and Michael Moriarty and expressed appreciation to David Roach and Vanessa Calderón-Rosado for their service. He said the Baker-Polito administration announced preschool expansion grants this week to expand access for low-income families in five cities through a partnership between the public and private sectors. Secretary Peyser said as the Board continues its discussion of PARCC and MCAS, we need to recommit to a system of standards, assessments, and accountability that continues the improvements seen over the last 20 years. He said achievement gaps must be addressed by building on education reform, not by abandoning those commitments.

Katherine Craven stepped out of the meeting at 9:00 a.m.

Comments from the Public

1. Janine Matho, of the Massachusetts Charter Public School Association, addressed the Board on charter school applicants.
2. Christina Shaw Fitanides, of Massachusetts Advocates for Children, addressed the Board on the autism endorsement regulations.
3. Roger Desrosiers, of the Massachusetts Center for Civic Education and a member of the Civic Learning and Engagement Working Group, addressed the Board on the Commissioner's recommendations.
4. Alan Melchior, of Brandeis University and a member of the Civic Learning and Engagement Working Group, addressed the Board on the Commissioner's recommendations.
5. Gerry Mroz addressed the Board on student assessment.

Approval of Minutes

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:

VOTED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education approve the minutes of the June 23, 2015 Regular Meeting.

The vote was unanimous.

Update on Holyoke Public Schools

Commissioner Chester introduced Holyoke Superintendent and Receiver Stephen Zrike and Senior Associate Commissioner Russell Johnston. Chair Sagan thanked Mr. Zrike for taking on the role of receiver and thanked Department staff for their work in Holyoke.

Superintendent Zrike thanked the Department for their expertise, support, time, and partnership. He also thanked the Executive Office of Education and Governor for their support. Mr. Zrike said it is still early in the turnaround process, and he has been out in the community speaking with educators, parents, students, and community members. He said families have great pride in Holyoke and while there are pockets of excellence, academic performance is very concerning. He said there is mistrust of the schools within the parent community and low staff morale. Mr. Zrike said he is looking at how best to use resources within the district and ensuring students have more options at the high school level.

In response to Mr. Willyard's question, Superintendent Zrike said the district made individual calls to Dean Vocational-Technical High School incoming ninth graders over the summer, and is working to re-engage current students and students who are at risk of dropping out. In response to Ms. McKenna's question regarding breakfast in the classroom, Superintendent Zrike said the EOS Foundation is meeting with principals this week to discuss the initiative. Mr. Moriarty applauded the Department's work with community members through the "community conversations" and said the quality of the discussions and organization of the meetings was the finest he has seen, and should continue. Commissioner Chester said he has been in the district and noted that community members previously opposed to the receivership have been very complimentary of Superintendent Zrike and the work that is underway. Chair Sagan extended the Board's appreciation to Superintendent Zrike.

Proposed Revised Science and Technology/Engineering Standards

Commissioner Chester thanked Secretary Peyser, Chair Sagan, and Penny Noyce for their input on the standards. He said the Board will continue the discussion of the proposed standards today and at the October meeting, when he will recommend a vote to seek public comment. Ms. Noyce said the Department team did an excellent job preparing and revising the standards. She said most of the changes to the draft standards discussed in May concerned tone, formatting, and clarification of intent. Secretary Peyser said the revisions also balance knowledge of vocabulary with knowledge of practice. Jake Foster, the Department's STEM Director, presented additional details about the revised standards. Ms. McKenna requested a "tracked changes" version comparing the May draft to the September draft. The Commissioner said he would send it to Board members within the next week.

Regulations on Autism Endorsement for Educator Licensure, 603 CMR 7.00

Commissioner Chester said the Board received a number of additional comments on the proposed regulations in June, which the Department took into consideration and then made further revisions. Commissioner Chester summarized four areas that had received comment from the public and the Board. He said a major revision involves opening the endorsement initially only to licensed special education teachers, and then the Department will seek input on whether and how the endorsement should be made available to general education teachers in the future. Commissioner Chester said he continues to believe the endorsement should be open to general educators, to encourage inclusion of students with autism. He said research shows special education students who are educated in inclusive general education classrooms have stronger outcomes. Commissioner Chester said language was also added to clarify that the endorsement is voluntary, and the licensure office will work to align the timing of renewals.

Ms. McKenna commended the changes and said the regulations landed in the right place. She said general educators should have this endorsement available but with a different process that may include additional coursework. Mr. Doherty said he is disappointed that the Department did not meet with the Massachusetts Teachers Association earlier to review the additional changes. Senior Associate Commissioner Johnston said the Department will engage with the MTA and other stakeholders in the next phase. Chair Sagan encouraged the Department to err on the side of over-communication.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:

VOTED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, in accordance with M.G.L. c. 69, § 1B, and c. 71, § 38G-1/2, as amended by Chapter 226 of the Acts of 2014, and having solicited public comment in accordance with the Administrative Procedure Act, G.L. chapter 30A, § 3, hereby adopt the amendments to the Regulations on Educator Licensure and Preparation Program Approval, 603 CMR 7.00, as presented by the Commissioner. The amendments establish standards for the Autism Endorsement.

Provided, further, that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education direct the Commissioner to seek input from stakeholders on the use of the endorsement in the field and educators' experience with the endorsement, including whether and how it should be expanded to general education teachers in the future to promote inclusion of students with disabilities in general education programs.

The vote was 9-0-1. Ed Doherty abstained.

Amendment to Charter School Regulations, 603 CMR 1.04(9) (Enable Better Planning for School Districts and Charter Applicants)

Commissioner Chester summarized the proposed amendment to the Charter School Regulations, which went before the Board in the spring for initial discussion and a vote to solicit public comment. He said the Department received only one comment, and it was in support of the proposed change. The Commissioner said the revised regulation is a small modification that will provide applicants and school districts clear expectations regarding timelines and eligibility.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:

VOTED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, in accordance with G.L. c. 69, § 1B, and c. 71, § 89, and having solicited public comment in accordance with the Administrative Procedure Act, G.L. chapter 30A, § 3, hereby adopts the amendment to the Charter School Regulations, 603 CMR 1.04(9), as presented by the Commissioner. The amendment would enable better planning for school districts and charter applicants; it addresses the calculation of the list of school districts performing in the lowest 10 percent on statewide assessments for purposes of awarding charters and for determining the net school spending caps for individual districts.

The vote was unanimous.

Committee Appointments and Update on National Association of State Boards of Education

Chair Sagan appointed Penny Noyce, James Morton, and himself to the Commissioner's Performance Evaluation Committee. He appointed Penny Noyce as the committee chair, and directed the committee to review the current evaluation criteria this fall, welcoming input from all Board members.

Chair Sagan appointed Katherine Craven, Ed Doherty, Margaret McKenna, Michael Moriarty, and Mary Ann Stewart to the Budget Committee. He said he would attend committee meetings if he is able to do so. He appointed Katherine Craven as the committee chair.

Chair Sagan appointed Roland Fryer, Secretary Peyser, Donald Willyard, and himself to the Charter School Committee. He appointed Roland Fryer as the committee chair.

Chair Sagan nominated James Morton as the Board's Vice-Chair.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:

VOTED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education elect James Morton to serve as Vice-Chair of the Board, in accordance with Article I of the By-Laws.

The vote was 9-0-1. James Morton abstained.

Chair Sagan said Mary Ann Stewart is a candidate for the National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE) Northeast Representative. Ms. Stewart and Mr. Willyard reported on the NASBE new member conference that they attended in July. Mr. Willyard said the conference was informative, and noted that some other state boards have a committee on legislation. Ms.

Stewart said it was eye-opening to meet members from other states. She said if elected as Northeast Representative, she would attend NASBE meetings four times a year and would update the Board periodically. Chair Sagan extended the Board's good wishes to Ms. Stewart and asked her to vote on behalf of Massachusetts at the NASBE annual meeting in October.

Katherine Craven returned to the meeting at 10:40 a.m.

Response to Recommendations from Working Group on Civic Learning and Engagement

Chair Sagan said civic learning and engagement is an important topic and the Board is committed to it, while also recognizing we should not over-promise what we will do. Commissioner Chester said he hears the urgency of the working group and the Department is determining how best to implement some of the recommendations. He said he would come back to the Board this fall with a more specific plan, including on the recommendation to set up more advisory councils beyond the ones already established by statute.

Mr. Willyard said the State Student Advisory Council chose civic learning as a priority and suggested the Department work with the SSAC on the recommendations. Ms. McKenna said the Board endorsed the report and recommendations as a priority and civic engagement is a critical cornerstone of public education. She said she would like to hear more in October and suggested establishing an advisory committee. Chair Sagan suggested the Budget Committee look at the cost of implementing some of the recommendations. Ms. Craven said the committee would do so. Secretary Peyser said this is a resource question; not an issue of whether to proceed, but a question of how and when. He requested a timeline for the development of a history/social science assessment as well as the framework review. Commissioner Chester said he will have a further report at the October meeting.

Student Assessment

Commissioner Chester recapped the topics that the Board covered at its special meeting on September 21, including statewide MCAS results and PARCC preliminary results. Bill Bell, the Department's Chief Financial Officer, provided an overview of PARCC costs. He said the PARCC computer-based assessment in grades 3-8 costs \$24 and the paper assessment costs \$34 per student. Commissioner Chester committed to providing the Board with benchmarks for what would be in a Request for Proposals for new MCAS development and cost estimates. In response to Chair Sagan's question, Mr. Bell said the cost of the PARCC assessment is holding steady, and additional computer-based tests would bring the cost down; however, the testing contract needs to be renegotiated next year.

Mr. Fryer asked about the economies of scope if Massachusetts were to adopt PARCC. Commissioner Chester said the main cost of test development was paid for by a federal grant. Mr. Fryer suggested separating the discussion of PARCC into two areas: governance and quality of the test. In response to Ms. McKenna's question, Mr. Wulfson said the consortium owns the intellectual property and PARCC, Inc is managing it on behalf of the member states. In response to Secretary Peyser's question, Mr. Wulfson said Pearson provides the online platform to deliver the PARCC test, and all consortium states use that platform. Commissioner Chester commented that the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium uses a different model than PARCC: UCLA holds the intellectual property and each state finds its own vendor. He said the 18 SBAC states varied greatly in their experience with the SBAC test, and the PARCC test administration in FY2015 was smoother and more successful than SBAC.

Secretary Peyser requested information comparing services and costs between PARCC and MCAS contracts. Mr. Morton requested more information on the governance structure and on districts' readiness for online assessment. Commissioner Chester said he will provide additional information in advance of the Board's October meeting. Ms. Stewart asked how the assessment would affect teaching and learning. Commissioner Chester noted the recent study of the Lexington Public Schools that former Superintendent Paul Ash commissioned, in which state assessment results helped to shine a light on achievement gaps that need to be addressed, even in high-performing districts.

Associate Commissioner Carrie Conaway presented information from studies and surveys on PARCC. She said a 2014 principal survey comparing MCAS and PARCC showed: 71% believe PARCC will be more demanding; 40% believe it will better assess students' ability to think critically, 30% "about the same;" 40% believe it presents test material in a format relevant to today's students, 25% "about the same." She said a teacher survey conducted by TeachPlus reported that 72% of teachers believe PARCC is a higher quality assessment than MCAS and 67% believe PARCC does extremely or very well at measuring critical thinking skills.

Ms. Conaway said PARCC survey results showed most administrators reported that students had sufficient time to complete the computer and paper test. She said according to PARCC survey results from students who took the computer-based test, they reported that few or none of the questions asked about things they had not learned in school this year (82% ELA, 79% math); many say that the test was easier than or the same as their school work (62% ELA, 52% math); and almost all said they finished early or on time (92% ELA, 92% math).

Ms. Conaway presented on the AIR studies on school and district assessment practices. She said the studies included a statewide survey of superintendents in October 2014, interviews of district and school staff in a representative sample of 35 districts in winter 2014-15, and case studies in four districts in spring 2015. Ms. Conaway said the results showed the most common uses for local assessments are addressing student academic needs such as diagnosis and placement and measuring progress; and the least common uses are student preparation or practice for state assessments and predicting student performance on state assessments. Commissioner Chester said districts should be reviewing their use of assessments to ensure they are useful and that educators are using the results to improve student achievement.

Ms. Noyce asked what can be drawn from the studies. Commissioner Chester said the studies should raise district awareness around their use and frequency of assessments, as well as assist districts in taking inventory of their own assessment practices.

Margaret McKenna left the meeting at 12:30 p.m.

Update on Level 5 Schools

Senior Associate Commissioner Russell Johnston said the school year is off to a great start for the four Level 5 schools, which are in year two of implementing their turnaround plans. He said the schools held at least three weeks of professional development for educators over the summer. Mr. Johnston informed the Board of leadership changes at the Dever and Parker schools.

In response to Ms. Stewart's question about family and community engagement, Mr. Johnston said the schools have strengthened their strategies from engagement to outreach in the communities and neighborhoods, and the quarter 1 reports will include details from each school. In response to Mr. Morton's question, Mr. Johnston said the Morgan School (Holyoke) has expanded its pre-kindergarten program with support from the pre-school expansion grant.

Update on Foundation Budget Review Commission and on Redefining the Low Income Metric for K-12 Education Data

Roger Hatch, Director of School Finance, provided the Board with an update on the Foundation Budget Review Commission, created by the Legislature and charged with reviewing the Chapter 70 formula's assumptions and factors. He said the foundation budget, used in calculating Chapter 70 state aid and charter school tuition rates, represents the minimum spending level for each district to provide an adequate education, given the specific grades, programs, and demographic characteristics of its students. Mr. Hatch said the commission's preliminary report found that actual spending on employee health insurance is generally higher than the current foundation budget allotment for such costs, and recommended: increasing the benefits rate; benchmarking active employee insurance to GIC municipal average; adding in retiree health insurance; and applying a separate inflation factor. He said the commission also found that districts spend much more on special education tuition for out-of-district special education placements than the current foundation budget allotment for that cost, and recommended increasing the cost rate to capture the total costs that districts bear before circuit breaker reimbursement is triggered.

Deputy Commissioner Wulfson provided an update on the measurement of low income status for K-12 students. He reminded the Board that the traditional metric, eligibility for free or reduced price lunch, is no longer available for schools participating the USDA Community Eligibility Program. He said the Department is using data from the Executive Office of Health and Human Services databases, having discussions with stakeholders to minimize transition impacts, and monitoring what other states are doing. Ms. Craven asked that the Department keep the Massachusetts School Building Authority apprised about any changes.

Process and Timelines for FY2017 Budget

Commissioner Chester reviewed the timelines for the next fiscal year's budget and the Department's annual state spending from FY08-FY16. He said the Board's Budget Committee will meet to discuss budget priorities and recommendations.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:

VOTED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education adjourn the meeting at 1:05 p.m., subject to the call of the Chair.

The vote was unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,
Mitchell D. Chester
Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education
and Secretary to the Board

**Minutes of the Special Meeting
of the Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education
Monday, October 19, 2015
4:05 p.m.- 7:10 p.m.
Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
75 Pleasant Street, Malden, MA**

Members of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education Present:

Paul Sagan, Chair, Cambridge
James Morton, Vice-Chair, Boston
Ed Doherty, Boston
Roland Fryer, Concord
Margaret McKenna, Boston
Michael Moriarty, Holyoke
Pendred Noyce, Boston
James Peyser, Secretary of Education
Mary Ann Stewart, Lexington
Donald Willyard, Chair, Student Advisory Council, Revere

Mitchell D. Chester, Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education, Secretary to the Board

Member of the Board Absent:

Katherine Craven, Brookline

Chair Sagan called the meeting to order at 4:05 p.m. Commissioner Chester welcomed Board members to the meeting. He acknowledged the retirement of Associate Commissioner Elizabeth Davis and introduced acting assessment director Michol Stapel. Commissioner Chester made the following statement regarding PARCC:

Our September discussion, along with the substantial public input that we have received, has helped me to hone my thinking about the recommendation that I will be making to you for our November MCAS-PARCC decision. While we purposefully designed a decision timeline that would allow Massachusetts to have two years' experience with PARCC before deciding the future of our assessment system, over the past several months I increasingly have been concerned that in our effort to gather both deep and broad analysis and perspective on MCAS and PARCC, it could be easy to lose the forest for the trees. There is the danger that substantial and extensive input, sometimes contradictory, can lead to decision paralysis wherein the status quo becomes the default position. It is my goal to pull us out of the trees so that we can appreciate the forest.

Three core understandings have emerged for me:

- 1) current MCAS has reached a point of diminished returns in terms of driving more ambitious curriculum, instruction, and learning;
- 2) in important ways, PARCC is a substantial advancement over MCAS in terms of
 - a) elevating expectations for student performance, b) signaling more ambitious curricular and instructional expectations of our schools, c) providing a more engaging assessment experience, and d) aligning with expectations of colleges and employers; and

- 3) the path we take must ensure that Massachusetts ultimately controls our testing program.

I have been thinking about two doors: #1, MCAS or #2, PARCC. I am now exploring Door #3: MCAS 2.0.

I will spend a minute or two on each of these three understandings.

Current MCAS and the point of diminished returns

MCAS has served the Commonwealth well. I cannot imagine that the success of the last two decades – as Massachusetts’s K-12 achievement has reached the tops among states and competitive internationally – would be possible without a high quality assessment that provides feedback on student, school, district, and state achievement and progress. In 2015, MCAS was administered for the 18th year. MCAS was a terrific 20th century assessment. We have better understandings now than one or two decades ago about learning progression in mathematics, text complexity and the interplay of reading and writing, and the academic expectations of higher education and employers.

Now that we have the benefit of two decades of experience and we have upgraded our learning expectations (curriculum frameworks and content standards), it is time to upgrade our assessments to a new generation. As we look to the Commonwealth’s next-generation assessment, we have the opportunity to build on these understandings. Perhaps my greatest concern about continuing with MCAS as it exists now is that we have reached a point of diminished returns. The time I spend in schools as well as the attestations we have heard from many educators and citizens have led me to realize that, too often, the response to MCAS is instruction designed to teach students to succeed on the test rather than instruction designed to meet the learning standards.

PARCC is a substantial advancement over MCAS

We started down the MCAS 2.0 path in 2008 – looking to develop performance-based components, online testing, and other features. When the recession hit, we tabled that initiative but we were able to join other states to access US Department of Education funding to build PARCC, with Massachusetts leadership and involvement. Over \$100 million went into test development and we now have the results of our two-year “test drive.”

As our discussion today and tomorrow will illustrate, in important ways PARCC sets a higher bar than MCAS for student performance. This is particularly true as students move up the grades into middle and high school. This higher bar is not simply about being harder. At least equally important is that PARCC provides more opportunity for critical thinking, application of knowledge, research, and connections between reading and writing. As I travel around the Commonwealth, I see more and more schools that are upgrading curriculum and instruction to be consistent with our 2010 frameworks, which in turn are represented in the PARCC assessments. At this point, the effort I am observing – and that you have heard testimony regarding – is not about succeeding on the test, but rather, about aligning curriculum and instruction to the expectations for critical thinking, application of knowledge, research, and connections between reading and writing.

As well, the online experience is a qualitatively different assessment experience than taking a paper-and-pencil test. The online environment is a more engaging experience (students

prefer the online environment by almost a two-to-one margin); the introduction of video and audio increases accessibility for many students, including students with disabilities and English language learners; and the online setting mirrors the digital world that is ubiquitous in students' lives and futures. Finally, the PARCC development effort we have been involved in is designed to assess our updated understanding of learning progressions in mathematics, text complexity and the interplay of reading and writing, and the academic expectations of higher education and employers.

Ensuring the Commonwealth's control of our standards and assessments

Public comment, as well as the Board's discussion, have helped me to understand the importance of ensuring the Commonwealth's control over our standards and assessments as we move forward. While Massachusetts has exercised a leadership role among the consortium states, any path forward to MCAS 2.0 that includes PARCC must be a direction over which we control.

To be confident that a course that involves PARCC is one in which we exercise ultimate agency over the direction of the Commonwealth's assessment program, I am considering a new model – Door #3 – that takes advantage of our access to PARCC development in the construction of MCAS 2.0. A model exists; Louisiana has taken a similar route. This path would involve our own contractor. Using PARCC as starting point for MCAS 2.0 would allow us to move faster and start further along towards MCAS 2.0.

Ms. Noyce asked what the new option would mean and how we could recoup our value and maintain control. Mr. Doherty asked if Massachusetts would formally end its relationship with the PARCC consortium. Commissioner Chester said Massachusetts has to figure out the best way forward. He said if remaining in the consortium means we would not have running room to customize the test, then that is not the right path. Mr. Fryer asked if PARCC is the best path to MCAS 2.0. Commissioner Chester said PARCC is a substantial advancement over the current MCAS and Massachusetts would be able to take advantage of PARCC development in which we have participated. Ms. McKenna commented that the Mathematica study took her aback and said she is glad to hear more about the third option.

Secretary Peyser introduced the presentation on the Mathematica study. He said the Executive Office of Education commissioned a study to analyze how well MCAS and PARCC predict college performance. He introduced Ira Nichols-Barrer and Brian Gill to present the findings. Mr. Gill said the researchers compared PARCC and MCAS relationships to first-year college students' grades and the students' assignment to remedial coursework; they then compared PARCC and MCAS test scores and success in reaching "college ready" or "proficient" levels. Mr. Nichols-Barrer said the student volunteers were randomly assigned to take MCAS or PARCC in Spring 2015. The sampling included 866 students at 11 public colleges and universities. Mr. Nichols-Barrer said MCAS and PARCC predict grade point average and remediation equally well. He said in English language arts the study found that college ready on PARCC is about the same as proficient on MCAS, and in mathematics the PARCC college ready standard is a higher standard than MCAS proficient. Mr. Nichols-Barrer said in summary, both MCAS and PARCC predict college readiness, scores on both exams provide a similarly useful way to predict college grade point average, and the exams differ in ways beyond predictive validity.

Chair Sagan asked what can be drawn from the predictive validity scale. Mr. Nichols-Barrer said .5 is considered moderate to strong. Mr. Fryer discussed assessment cut points. Ms. McKenna said SAT and student grades combined are better predictors than either one is alone.

Secretary Peyser introduced Dana Ansel, Henry Braun, and Andrew Ho to discuss the PARCC/MCAS comparative report. Ms. Ansel said the report synthesizes the academic research on MCAS and PARCC, breaking out relevant considerations without making any recommendations. Ms. Ansel and Mr. Ho highlighted the following:

- MCAS and PARCC are different assessment systems and create different incentives for classroom practices.
- Increasingly, a single test is used for multiple purposes. There is a need to balance the objectives you are seeking to achieve.
- There is no major finding that one test is superior to the other. Both meet technical standards.
- MCAS proficiency in 2013 is a different standard than it was in 2004.
- MCAS is limited by the item format.
- Consider which system sends the clearest signals to students, teachers, parents, and the public and choose a test that will prompt educators and policymakers to intervene when needed so students can become successful.

In response to Mr. Fryer's question, Mr. Braun said there is evidence that teachers have been changing their practice since the adoption of new standards in 2010, which brought a higher level of critical thinking. He said he believes PARCC is a test worth teaching to so he is an advocate for it.

Margaret McKenna left the meeting at 5:30 p.m.

Commissioner Chester welcomed Higher Education Commissioner Carlos Santiago. Commissioner Santiago said the Board of Higher Education's academic affairs committee is also having conversations about PARCC. He said during his two years in Massachusetts he has been shocked by the high remediation rates and low success rates for students in public higher education. Commissioner Santiago said higher education campuses are looking at ways to address the issue including revising developmental requirements and piloting the use of high school grade point averages in lieu of Accuplacer testing. He said higher education has been collaborating with elementary and secondary education, beginning with the adoption of a joint definition of college and career readiness, and more recently with PARCC development including a professional judgment study, standard setting, and other activities.

In response to Ms. Noyce's question, Commissioner Santiago said faculty who were involved in the judgment study advocated giving students clear signals at an early stage to help them meet the standards for college readiness. He said students need support structures, mentoring, and active advising. In response to Secretary Peyser's question, Commissioner Santiago said higher education is studying whether PARCC could replace the need for Accuplacer testing, while recognizing that campuses also need to get better at addressing remediation.

Commissioner Chester introduced Laura Slover, Chief Executive Officer, and Jeff Nellhaus, Director of Assessment of PARCC, Inc. Ms. Slover said PARCC was established by chief state school officers to develop a next-generation assessment. She said Massachusetts served an outsized role and Commissioner Chester has been the intellectual leader elected by other chiefs to serve as the board chair of the consortium. Ms. Slover said 5 million students in 12 states took PARCC in spring 2015, 4 million on computer.

Mr. Nellhaus said states have led the development of the assessment. He said the English language arts (ELA) assessment incorporates extended writing prompts, reading and writing across grades, and scores for reading and writing. He said MCAS offers extended essays only in three grades and does not break out reading and writing in the ELA tests. Mr. Nellhaus said PARCC asks students to solve real world problems in mathematics and the computer-based test has interactive and engaging items.

Ms. Slover said PARCC offers quality and affordability. She said no state starting from scratch could get the same value in development and administration, since \$186 million has gone into developing PARCC over five years. She said the costs are currently \$24 per student for online testing and \$32 for paper testing. Ms. Slover said PARCC has 30,000 test items in an item bank that could support four years of testing. She said states left the consortium due to politics, not the quality of the test. She noted that Louisiana has customized PARCC and the Bureau of Indian Affairs is joining. Ms. Slover said PARCC, Inc. is prepared to support Massachusetts with what works best for the Commonwealth.

Mary Ann Stewart left the meeting at 6:50 p.m.

Chair Sagan asked what it would mean to be part of the consortium but customize the assessment. Ms. Slover said the PARCC governing board has set three tiers: Tier 1 is the governing board states, Tier 2 states use the full assessment but are not part of the governing board, and Tier 3 states use PARCC content with a different testing vendor. She said cost differs because governing board states have devoted more time and effort to development. In response to Mr. Willyard's question, Ms. Slover said the testing contract goes through 2017-2018. Chair Sagan noted the MCAS contract has to be rebid next year. Mr. Nelhaus said that each year, a full form of the PARCC assessment at each grade would be released along with long and short responses, so that teachers can use the materials to improve instruction. He said the consortium states have a good history of working together to make adjustments, such as the reduction in testing time. In response to a question about schools' readiness for computer-based assessments, Mr. Nellhaus said schools and states can rise to the occasion; for example, in New Mexico, 93% of the students took the PARCC tests online. He added that a paper version of the tests would be available to states as long as they need it.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:

VOTED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education adjourn the meeting at 7:10 p.m., subject to the call of the Chair.

The vote was unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,
Mitchell D. Chester

Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education
and Secretary to the Board

2015C minutes

**Minutes of the Regular Meeting
of the Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education
Tuesday, October 20, 2015
8:35 a.m.–12:45 p.m.
Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
75 Pleasant Street, Malden, MA**

Members of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education Present:

Paul Sagan, Chair, Cambridge
James Morton, Vice-Chair, Boston
Ed Doherty, Boston
Roland Fryer, Concord
Michael Moriarty, Holyoke
Pendred Noyce, Boston
James Peyser, Secretary of Education
Mary Ann Stewart, Lexington
Donald Willyard, Chair, Student Advisory Council, Revere

Mitchell D. Chester, Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education, Secretary to the Board

Members of the Board Absent:

Katherine Craven, Brookline
Margaret McKenna, Boston

Chair Sagan called the meeting to order at 8:35 a.m. and welcomed Board members. Commissioner Chester reported that Massachusetts has received a \$7 million grant to expand the state's longitudinal data system. The commissioner said he anticipates release of 2015 National Assessment of Educational Progress results in grade 4 and 8 reading and mathematics next week. He updated the Board on the organizational review of the Department that Parthenon-EY is conducting.

Secretary Peyser thanked Commissioner Chester for his comments on student assessment at the October 19 special meeting and said he agrees with the three principles the commissioner outlined: MCAS needs an upgrade, PARCC reflects good new thinking and techniques that will help improve instruction, and Massachusetts needs to control its destiny and maintain its leadership. Chair Sagan concurred.

Ms. Noyce reported on behalf of the Commissioner's Performance Evaluation Committee. She said the committee met on October 19 to update the performance criteria, integrating several initiatives and adding a mid-year check-in with the Commissioner. Mr. Fryer reported on the Charter School Committee meeting on October 19. He said the committee reviewed and discussed the charter school approval process, hearing schedule, and various data points.

Approval of Minutes

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:

VOTED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education approve the minutes of the September 21, 2015 Special Meeting and September 22, 2015 Regular Meeting.

The vote was unanimous.

Lawrence Public Schools: Update on Receivership

Lawrence Receiver/Superintendent Jeff Riley presented an overview of the fourth year of the Lawrence Public Schools receivership. He said the continued focus is on four pillars of high-quality teaching and learning: rigorous standards, high-quality enrichment, effort/mindset, and critical thinking and fluid reasoning. He said Lawrence continues to see an increase in the percentage of students achieving at proficient and advanced levels, as well as an improved graduation rate and decreased dropout rate. Superintendent Riley said through a federal pre-kindergarten expansion grant, Lawrence has added 130 new full-day, year-round pre-kindergarten seats for eligible four-year-olds. He said the Playball Foundation has made a generous donation to support the expansion of middle school intramural sports. Superintendent Riley provided an update on the high school redesign initiative, aimed at preparing all Lawrence High School students for success after graduation. He outlined district strategies including the 9th grade academy model, a special education taskforce to guide improvements, support for teacher leadership teams at each school as well as leadership opportunities district-wide, ongoing work on a facilities master plan, and new data systems.

Mr. Doherty arrived at 8:50 a.m.

Mr. Fryer commented that across the country, turnaround work tends to yield modest rates of growth in English language arts (ELA) achievement and somewhat better results in math achievement. He asked Mr. Riley about the experience in Lawrence. Superintendent Riley said he has seen more progress in the upper elementary grades, particularly where students have access to math tutors, and the tutoring may be expanded to ELA. He added that the February and April vacation academies accelerate student growth by providing 30 hours of ELA. In response to Ms. Stewart's question, Superintendent Riley explained the origin of the Sontag prize, which funds professional development for teachers and their work with students in the acceleration academies. In response to Ms. Noyce's questions, Superintendent Riley said there are 14,000 K-12 students in Lawrence Public Schools, up from 12,500 before receivership.

Commissioner Chester commended Jeff Riley's leadership. He said the children of Lawrence are in a much better place than they were five years ago, and there is still much work to do after decades of deterioration. The commissioner thanked Senior Associate Commissioner Russell Johnston and his staff for their work on school and district turnaround and support.

Comments from the Public

- 1. New Bedford Public Schools Superintendent Pia Durkin addressed the Board on PARCC.**
- 2. Boston Public Schools Superintendent Tommy Chang addressed the Board on PARCC.**

3. Revere Public School Superintendent Dianne Kelly addressed the Board on PARCC.

Commissioner Chester thanked the three superintendents for their leadership in urban education.

Holyoke Public Schools: Turnaround Plan

Holyoke Receiver/Superintendent Stephen Zrike outlined the district turnaround plan, which was released on October 1. He said the goals include: building on what is working and fixing what is not, staff empowerment and accountability, extending time for learning, establishing pathways to career and/or college success, investing in partners strategically, and repairing relationships with families. He reviewed the five turnaround plan priority areas. Superintendent Zrike said the turnaround plan has been discussed during community meetings, community partner information sessions, and meetings with school personnel. He said family engagement is a critical component of the turnaround effort, and includes community meetings in public housing as well as home visits by school staff. Senior Associate Commissioner Russell Johnston said staff recruitment and contract offers will start much earlier this school year, beginning in January. Commissioner Chester expressed his appreciation to Superintendent Zrike for taking on this assignment and the excellent work he has done in Holyoke thus far, under very tight timelines.

Student Assessment

Commissioner Chester said he feels strongly that Massachusetts needs to move forward, and the two-year “test drive” provided valuable experience, data, and input on the development of a next-generation assessment. He said Board members are receiving a lot of contradictory input, and we should not lose sight of the forest for the trees. He reiterated his comments from Monday evening’s special meeting:

Three core understandings have emerged:

- 1) MCAS has been a strong assessment, and has reached a point of diminished returns in its 18th year; some schools are putting more energy into success on MCAS than into strengthening curriculum, instruction, and learning;
- 2) In important ways, PARCC is a substantial advancement over MCAS in terms of a) elevating expectations for student performance, b) signaling more ambitious curricular and instructional expectations of our schools, c) providing a more engaging assessment experience, and d) aligning with expectations of colleges and employers; and
- 3) The path we take must ensure that Massachusetts ultimately controls our own assessment program.

The commissioner said he had been thinking about two doors – MCAS or PARCC – but he is now exploring Door #3: MCAS 2.0, capitalizing on the investment that Massachusetts educators have made in PARCC by making it the foundation of MCAS 2.0. He said Massachusetts cannot stand still; we need a strong assessment to complement our strong academic standards.

Bob Lee, the Department's MCAS Chief Analyst and PARCC Coordinator, reviewed assessment choices that districts made in Spring 2015, with 54 percent of districts choosing to administer PARCC. He explained that the representative sample of students who took PARCC or MCAS statistically matches the state student population. Mr. Lee explained that PARCC achievement levels range from 1-5, and MCAS reports performance on four levels ranging from Warning/Failing to Advanced. He reviewed statewide PARCC English language arts and mathematics results, and compared assessment results from MCAS, PARCC, and the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). Chair Sagan reminded members that the Board has already decided to maintain MCAS as the high school graduation (competency determination) standard for students through the class of 2019.

Ken Klau, Director of Digital Learning, presented information on the technology requirements and readiness of schools to administer PARCC computer-based testing. He said 1,363 schools meet minimum specifications; 442 schools are not yet ready. He explained that upgrading all schools and classrooms for digital learning is more costly than simply upgrading for computer-based testing. Deputy Commissioner Jeff Wulfson noted that Massachusetts is lagging other states in investment in digital learning. Mr. Klau said federal e-rate funding is a large source of support, along with the state's competitive digital connection grant program. Chair Sagan requested a statewide map of technology readiness.

Level 5 Schools Update

Senior Associate Commissioner Russell Johnston gave a brief overview of the Quarter 1 reports from the four Level 5 schools. He said common themes included professional development for teachers during the summer, staffing improvements, schools using budget autonomies, and scheduling and curriculum changes. Mr. Johnston said the receivers meet quarterly and will focus on family engagement at their next meeting.

Updated Response to Recommendations from Working Group on Civic Learning and Engagement

Commissioner Chester said he is reporting back on the Department's response to the working group's recommendations. He reviewed the implementation plan and noted that he would like to be more ambitious with the plan if the Department had more resources and staff to do so. Commissioner Chester said he will update the Board on this initiative as it proceeds.

Proposed Revised Science and Technology/Engineering Standards

Chair Sagan said the draft revised standards reflect refinements that were made in response to the Board's input at the May and September meetings. He said with the Board's approval, the Department will invite broad public input through November, make any necessary edits, and then bring the final revised STE standards to the Board for adoption in January 2016. Secretary Peyser said the standards reflect the need for students to develop a conceptual understanding as well as science and engineering practices that will help them apply learning and be analytical thinkers.

VOTED: **that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, in accordance with Chapter 69, Sections 1D and 1E of the Mass. General Laws, authorize the Commissioner to solicit public comment on the draft revised *Science and Technology/Engineering (STE) Standards*.**

The vote was unanimous.

Board of Elementary and Secondary Education FY17 Budget Proposal and Report from the Board's Budget Committee

Commissioner Chester reported that the budget committee met to discuss the FY2017 budget process. He said the committee focused on areas of the budget that are designed to narrow proficiency gaps and strengthen the Department's capacity for turnaround work with schools and districts. Commissioner Chester said the Foundation Budget Review Commission is recommending increases in funding for K-12 education.

Roland Fryer left at 12:00 noon.

Student Assessment (Continued)

Commissioner Chester said he is still considering what option number three would entail with respect to Massachusetts's role in the consortium, test development, and other details. He said one option would be to submit a request for information from experienced assessment vendors to build a next-generation MCAS 2.0 using the best of PARCC but not limited to it. Chair Sagan said after last night's discussion with PARCC, Inc.'s leadership team, it is clearer now that Massachusetts has more flexibility as part of the consortium. Ms. Noyce said she appreciates the additional thinking, and as part of the two-year test drive the Board decided upon she has never felt bound to a binary decision. She said PARCC provides a much better signal of each student's college readiness and she would like to see PARCC given in the spring with the understanding that Massachusetts will have autonomy to customize the test in the future. Mr. Moriarty said his first priority is an assessment's ability to drive improvement and close achievement gaps. Mr. Morton said technology needs are still concerning, and requested further details on the MCAS 2.0 proposal. He said he is torn about the possibility of pulling out of the PARCC consortium and appreciates that Massachusetts has been a leader in it. Commissioner Chester said the vision of the consortium was to give honest feedback to students regardless of their state.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:

VOTED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education adjourn the meeting at 12:45 p.m., subject to the call of the Chair.

The vote was unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,
Mitchell D. Chester
Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education
and Secretary to the Board

**Minutes of the Special Meeting
of the Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education
Monday, November 16, 2015
4:05 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.
Malden High School
77 Salem Street, Malden, MA**

Members of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education Present:

Paul Sagan, Chair, Cambridge
James Morton, Vice-Chair, Boston
Katherine Craven, Brookline
Ed Doherty, Boston
Margaret McKenna, Boston
Michael Moriarty, Holyoke
Pendred Noyce, Boston
James Peyser, Secretary of Education
Mary Ann Stewart, Lexington
Donald Willyard, Chair, Student Advisory Council, Revere

Mitchell D. Chester, Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education, Secretary to the Board

Members of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education Absent:

Roland Fryer, Concord

Chair Sagan welcomed members of the Board and the public to the sixth public hearing on student assessment. He thanked Malden Superintendent David DeRuosi and Malden High School Principal Dana Brown for hosting the meeting. Chair Sagan asked the Commissioner to outline his recommendation.

Commissioner Chester said three conclusions form the basis for his recommendation: (1) MCAS has served the Commonwealth well, but has reached a point of diminishing returns; (2) PARCC is a substantial advancement over our current assessment system; and (3) Massachusetts must remain in control of its standards and assessment development. Commissioner Chester summarized additional details of his recommendation. He said districts administering PARCC in 2016 would be held harmless from negative consequences of using the test scores for purposes of accountability determinations, and that for purposes of educator evaluation in PARCC districts, student growth scores that are out of line with other data would not be used. The Commissioner said we are committing to a goal of implementing computer-based testing statewide by 2019 but would continue to have a paper option available as an accommodation. He said he would keep the Board informed on districts' technology readiness. Commissioner Chester added that he and Chair Sagan have discussed having a special committee of the Board focus on student assessment.

Comments from the Public:

1. Mary Bourque, Chelsea Public Schools Superintendent and President-elect of the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents
2. Jon Sills, Bedford Public School Superintendent
3. Tom Gosnell, American Federation of Teachers-Massachusetts

4. Bill Gaines, Executive Director, Massachusetts Secondary School Administrators
5. Michael Barth, Seven Hills Charter Public School
6. Nikki Brow, Student, Seven Hills Charter Public School
7. Evette Ansah, Student, Seven Hills Charter Public School
8. Anu Akibu, Student, Seven Hills Charter Public School
9. Hailey Aucoin, Student, Seven Hills Charter Public School
10. Gerry Mroz, Parent, Melrose
11. Senator Patricia Jehlen, Somerville
12. Representative Marjorie Decker, Cambridge
13. Laina Simone, Parent, North Reading
14. Tara Bennett, President, Massachusetts Secondary School Administrators
15. Barbara Madeloni, President, Massachusetts Teachers Association
16. Bill Walczak, Chief Executive Officer of Dorchester Health Center and chair of the Massachusetts Business Alliance for Education Board
17. Becca Moscovitz, Educator, Excel Academy Charter School
18. Henry Dinger, board member, Massachusetts Business Alliance for Education
19. Neal Kinnon, Malden City Council, Mystic Valley Charter School board member, and parent
20. Kathleen Smith, Brockton Public Schools Superintendent
21. Julie Koepke, Educator, school committee member, and parent
22. Stephanie Grimes, Parent, Tewksbury
23. Suzanne Federspiel, retired teacher and principal, Boston Public Schools
24. Brittany Vetter, Educator, Excel Academy Charter School
25. Shelia Hanley, retired educator, Randolph
26. Jason Williams, Executive Director, Stand for Children
27. Ursula Allston-Hill, Parent, Boston
28. Lisa Malera, Parent, Boston
29. Elsa Flores, Parent, Boston
30. Carmen Cruz, Parent, Boston
31. Maria Coronado, Parent, Boston
32. Vilma Soto, Parent, Boston
33. Rebecaa Steinitz, Educator, Greater Lawrence Technical High School
34. Kendra Herdeger, Educator
35. Missy Costello, Educator, Newton
36. Jane Frantz, Educator, Newton
37. Kalpana Guttman, Educator, Newton
38. Michael Zilles, Educator, Newton
39. Eileen Rudden, board member, Massachusetts Business Alliance for Education
40. Lisa Guisbond, Executive Director, Citizens for Public Schools
41. Jean Sherlock, Educator, Chicopee
42. Julie O'Neil, Educator, Boston
43. Lindsay Sobel, Executive Director, TeachPlus
44. Brian Kavanaugh, Orleans
45. Liz Daneau, Teacher and Parent, Woburn
46. Joe Esposito, board member, Massachusetts Business Alliance for Education
47. Krista Fincke, Educator, Excel Academy Charter School
48. Les Perlman, Lexington
49. Tom Reid, Educator, Swampscott High School
50. Kenny Jervis, Parent, Boston
51. LaToya Gill, Parent, Boston

Chair Sagan thanked the presenters and Board members.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:

**VOTED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education adjourn the meeting
 at 7:30 p.m., subject to the call of the Chair.**

The vote was unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,
Mitchell D. Chester
Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education
and Secretary to the Board

**Minutes of the Regular Meeting
of the Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education
Tuesday, November 17, 2015
8:40 a.m. – 12:55 p.m.
Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
75 Pleasant Street, Malden, MA**

Members of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education Present:

Paul Sagan, Chair, Cambridge
James Morton, Vice-Chair, Boston
Katherine Craven, Brookline
Ed Doherty, Boston
Roland Fryer, Concord
Margaret McKenna, Boston
Michael Moriarty, Holyoke
Pendred Noyce, Boston
James Peyser, Secretary of Education
Mary Ann Stewart, Lexington
Donald Willyard, Chair, Student Advisory Council, Revere

Mitchell D. Chester, Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education, Secretary to the Board

Chair Sagan called the meeting to order at 8:40 a.m. and welcomed members of the Board and public.

Approval of Minutes

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:

VOTED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education approve the minutes of the October 19, 2015 Special Meeting and October 20, 2015 Regular Meeting.

The vote was unanimous.

Commissioner Chester informed the Board about the recent report issued by the Foundation Budget Review Commission. He reported on the results for Massachusetts fourth and eighth graders in reading and mathematics on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) exam. He said Massachusetts was alone among states in being first in fourth grade reading and tied for first among states in fourth grade mathematics, eighth grade reading and eighth grade mathematics. Commissioner Chester said while these results are commendable, two areas of concern in the NAEP report are the decline in eighth grade mathematics results in Massachusetts and other states, and the fact that eighth grade reading results for Hispanic students in Massachusetts lag behind other states. The commissioner also commented on the Department's organizational review, the recent ACLU report on data privacy, the Department's eighth annual Fall Summit for educators, and the upcoming district review of the Southbridge Public Schools.

PARCC Spring 2015 School and District Results

Bob Lee, Chief Assessment Analyst, reviewed PARCC results in grades 3-8 English language arts and mathematics for urban districts, Commissioner's districts, and statewide. He highlighted Leominster, Chicopee, Malden, and Newton for their notable results. Mr. Lee explained the ways in which MCAS scores translate to the PARCC performance scale.

Dr. Fryer commented on relative growth among students. In response to Ms. McKenna's question about the timeline for releasing results, Mr. Lee said Massachusetts was the first state to report PARCC results and that the standard-setting process in this first year of operation delayed the release date. Commissioner Chester said summer is the target for releasing 2016 PARCC results.

Commissioner's Recommendation on Student Assessment for FY2016 and Beyond

Chair Sagan called for a motion, which was duly made and seconded:

MOVED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, in accordance with Mass. General Laws chapter 69, sections 1B and 1I, hereby endorses the approach recommended by the Commissioner to develop the next-generation Massachusetts student assessment program, and directs the Commissioner to take steps as outlined in his November 12, 2015 memorandum to the Board to achieve that objective.

Commissioner Chester said over the past two decades Massachusetts has come a long way in reducing inequities in K-12 education, through the grand bargain of education reform. He said three conclusions form the basis for his assessment recommendation: (1) MCAS has served the Commonwealth well, but has reached a point of diminishing returns; (2) PARCC is a substantial advancement over our current assessment system; and (3) Massachusetts must remain in control of its standards and assessment development.

Commissioner Chester summarized his recommendations. With respect to recommendation 6 in his memo, he clarified that *any* districts administering PARCC in 2016 would be held harmless from negative consequences of using the test scores for purposes of accountability determinations, and that for purposes of educator evaluation in PARCC districts, student growth scores that are out of line with other data would not be used. He said he has talked with Chair Sagan about appointing a Board committee to work with the Commissioner as we proceed with the assessment program.

Secretary Peyser thanked the Commissioner and Chair for a thoughtful, deliberative, inclusive process. He said the hybrid approach draws on the strengths of MCAS and PARCC, allows Massachusetts to retain control, and minimizes uncertainty and costs by using well vetted test items. He said spring 2016 would be a bridge to an integrated single test in 2017. Secretary Peyser endorsed the Commissioner's recommendation.

Ms. Stewart asked about the members of the assessment committees. The Commissioner said there are multiple panels and they include academic experts as well as K-12 teachers and administrators. Dr. Noyce asked about districts' choice of assessment for 2016. Commissioner Chester said he is recommending a Massachusetts next-generation test starting in 2017 and his message is that districts should use PARCC this year to help students get familiar with what will be the basis for the new test.

Ms. Craven said the Commissioner's recommendation responds to what the Board heard from the public in all the hearings and it preserves our control and our investments. She said "no testing" is not an option. Ms. Craven said her big concern is communication and collaboration to build coalitions again as with MCAS; she said MCAS was controversial at first but it raised expectations and we can do that again. Ms. Craven said she supports the recommendation.

Mr. Doherty said he has heard lots of contradictory information and is not convinced that PARCC is better than MCAS. He said MCAS has served Massachusetts well and could be updated. He said tests should not be used to punish and that the real problem is poverty. Mr. Doherty said he supports a moratorium on testing.

Vice-Chair Morton said the Commissioner's proposal is consistent with the idea of improving MCAS. He said better tests prompt better teaching, and we need good tests and good data. Vice-Chair Morton said his main concerns are the timeline and equitable access to technology for low-income children.

Mr. Moriarty said he supports the recommendations and the grand bargain of education reform, which has benefited his city of Holyoke. He said assessments provide essential information, especially in poor districts. In response to Mr. Moriarty's question about recommendation 4, Commissioner Chester said as we develop next-generation assessments, it is appropriate to review the English language arts and mathematics standards to see if any modifications are needed after five years of implementation.

Ms. McKenna said she believes the pendulum on testing has swung too much towards punitive use rather than accountability and helping. She said she is not opposed to a new test but believes it cannot be done responsibly by 2017. Commissioner Chester explained the process is different than developing a brand-new test, because we have already invested a great deal in test development and have four years' worth of vetted PARCC test items. He said because we are much further along in test development, the 2017 date is aggressive but doable. The Commissioner added that each year we have been giving a new form of MCAS, and the proposal for 2017 is akin to that. Ms. McKenna said she is skeptical and suggested following the example of Maryland to give districts and students more time and money for technology.

Chair Sagan asked Commissioner Chester if there is a back-up plan for 2017. The Commissioner said the assessment technical advisory committee and the Department's assessment staff are confident we can deliver a technically sound test in 2017. Dr. Noyce said assessment is a key tool to reducing achievement gaps: tests do not eliminate gaps, but they point out gaps and move the dial toward more assistance and justice for students, as in Lawrence. She said formative assessment, done well, helps to improve teaching and learning, and we need more of it. Dr. Noyce said she supports the Commissioner's recommendation and would advocate holding districts and teachers harmless for two years. Commissioner Chester said a moratorium on accountability for too long would shortchange students.

Mr. Willyard said he is the elected representative of students and they are opposed to PARCC because of the time limits and concerns about access to technology. He said he found the PARCC math test last year too hard. Dr. Fryer said we need assessments that expand opportunities. He said poverty is not destiny and recounted his own experience. He said schools should not be held harmless for too long. Dr. Fryer said testing is important and good schools have a transformative effect.

Commissioner Chester said he would work closely with a Board committee on assessment, and he also plans to convene advisory panels of educators. In response to a question from Mr. Doherty, Commissioner Chester said he would be interested in recommendations from professional organizations for the advisory panels of educators.

Ms. McKenna agreed with Dr. Fryer that schooling transforms lives and poverty is not destiny. She said she would make a motion to hold schools harmless based on the new test through 2017. Secretary Peyser said he is opposed to anything that would prevent identifying schools and districts that need intervention. He cautioned that hold harmless for some districts could lock others into the lower ranks.

Chair Sagan thanked Commissioner Chester for his integrity and perseverance on this issue, and thanked Board members and the teachers and other concerned citizens who have expressed their views. He said he supports the Commissioner's recommendation. Chair Sagan said he knows the Board hashed out similarly difficult issues regarding assessment two decades ago, and the Commonwealth's students have been served better as a result. He said assessment shines a light on where we are failing; we hold ourselves and other adults responsible and provide tools to address the needs. Chair Sagan said we can use PARCC now without losing control, and the PARCC hybrid would take advantage of millions of dollars already invested in development. He suggested the Department look into overuse of local testing in some schools. Chair Sagan said he will appoint a special committee of the Board to focus on assessment.

Ms. McKenna said she would like to amend the motion to say the new test would be effective in 2018 for accountability purposes and districts would be held harmless in 2016 and 2017. Chair Sagan cautioned that we need to preserve flexibility and not jeopardize the Commonwealth's standing with the U.S. Department of Education when the current ESEA waiver expires. Dr. Noyce said she would make a motion to amend the main motion, accepting the Commissioner's recommendation and adding a proviso to hold schools and districts harmless in 2016 and 2017.

Commissioner Chester said he does not support a motion that would handcuff our ability to intervene in a struggling school or district for two-plus years. Ms. McKenna said she would simply add one year to what the Commissioner already proposed. She stated that 19 new tests would have to be created. Secretary Peyser said he opposes the amendment because it is overly broad and risks losing momentum. He said the Board and Commissioner must be able to continue to exercise judgment, using the data we have, rather than putting the accountability system on hold for two years. Chair Sagan concurred, noting that these decisions affect the most underserved students. He suggested the Board could return to this question in the future if it proves necessary. Mr. Willyard said he supports the amendment.

In response to a question from Dr. Fryer, Commissioner Chester described the five levels in the accountability system. He said of the current Level 3 schools, 15-20 are of concern, and several of the Level 4 schools are of concern. Vice-Chair Morton asked if factors other than test scores enter into the determination of a school's accountability level. The Commissioner said the list of the lowest 20% is based solely on test scores, but other factors are considered in determining placement in Level 4 or 5. Dr. Noyce asked if the amendment then affects movement into Level 3, but schools could still move to Level 4 or 5. Secretary Peyser said Level 3 status gives the school access to greater resources and technical assistance. Mr. Moriarty said he opposes putting accountability and resources on hold for two years, noting that this year's kindergarteners will be in grade 3 by 2018. Commissioner Chester said the accountability system has been effective and the amendment would take an effective tool off the table. Ms. McKenna said the amendment just

extends the Commissioner's recommendation on hold harmless by another year, and it relates only to the use of test scores. General Counsel Rhoda Schneider suggested the Board could defer action on the hold harmless question until the next meeting, to allow further consideration.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:

VOTED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education amend the main motion as presented by adding, after the word "objective," the following language:

“, provided that schools and districts administering PARCC in spring 2016 and administering the new test in spring 2017, in grades 3-8, will be held harmless for any negative changes in their school and district accountability level based on those test scores.”

The motion passed by a vote of 7-4. Ms. Craven, Mr. Moriarty, Secretary Peyser, and Chair Sagan voted in opposition.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:

VOTED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, in accordance with Mass. General Laws chapter 69, sections 1B and 1I, hereby endorses the approach recommended by the Commissioner to develop the next-generation Massachusetts student assessment program, and directs the Commissioner to take steps as outlined in his November 12, 2015 memorandum to the Board to achieve that objective, provided that schools and districts administering PARCC in spring 2016 and administering the new test in spring 2017, in grades 3-8, will be held harmless for any negative changes in their school and district accountability level based on those test scores.

The motion, as amended, passed by a vote of 8-3. Mr. Doherty, Ms. Stewart, and Mr. Willyard voted in opposition.

Chair Sagan appointed members to a temporary Board committee on assessment; Dr. Fryer (chair), Dr. Noyce (vice-chair), Secretary Peyser, Mr. Willyard, and Chair Sagan. He noted that per the bylaws, all Board members are welcome to attend committee meetings.

Dr. Fryer left the meeting at 12:30 p.m.

Commissioner Chester thanked the Board for its thoughtful deliberations and said he is very pleased with the outcome.

Board of Elementary and Secondary Education FY2017 Budget Proposal and Report from the Board's Budget Committee

Committee chair Katherine Craven presented the committee's recommendations as to general priority areas for the FY2017 state education budget. She noted there are several unknowns at this stage of state budget planning, including the recommendation from the Foundation Budget Review Commission for potentially \$1 billion more in state aid for education, and the possibility of 9C cuts this year. Ms. McKenna asked that the bullet point on educational time be amended to include summer learning. The Board agreed by consensus to that change. In response to a question from Dr. Noyce, Ms. Craven said the list is not in priority order. Secretary Peyser said he would abstain from the vote, since by statute he receives the Board's budget proposal.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:

VOTED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, in accordance with Mass. Gen. Laws chapter 69, § 1A, approve the budget priorities for the FY2017 education budget as recommended by the Board's budget committee and the Commissioner, and direct the Commissioner to convey these recommendations and priorities to the Secretary of Education, the Governor, and the Legislature.

The vote was 9-0-1. Secretary Peyser abstained.

Update on Holyoke Public Schools

Ventura Rodriguez updated the Board on implementation of the Holyoke district turnaround plan. He said the district has hired Erin Linville as Chief Officer for Strategy and Turnaround and Nancy Athas as the acting principal for the Peck Middle School. Mr. Rodriguez said the district is exploring extending learning time and community engagement practices, and is providing multiple pathways to re-engage dropouts including a partnership with the Boys and Girls Club, online credit recovery, accelerated courses, and social/emotional supports.

Additional Updates

Ms. Stewart provided Board members with a recap of the National Association of State Boards of Education annual conference in Baltimore. She said the conference focused on changing demographics, student data privacy, and the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, among other topics. Ms. Stewart reported she was elected as the Northeast Representative to the NASBE board. She said the NASBE legislative conference will be held April 4-5, 2016.

Dr. Noyce reported that the Commissioner's performance evaluation committee is in the process of updating the performance criteria, which all members will receive after she has reviewed the document with the Commissioner.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:

**VOTED: that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education adjourn the meeting
 at 12:55 p.m., subject to the call of the Chair.**

The vote was unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,
Mitchell D. Chester
Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education
and Secretary to the Board